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CHANCES AND CHANGES

A DOMESTIC STORY

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "SIX WEEKS ON THE LOIRE."

"Of *chance* or *change*, O let not man complain."

BEATTIE.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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CHANCES AND CHANGES.

CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECTION.

AFTER this explanation with her father, Catherine felt herself imperatively called upon to relinquish all correspondence with Hamilton—all hope of their union—all hope—relinquish all hope, did we say?—Ah, no! that was an error—all but hope, we should have said—it was hope alone that sustained her. Unconsciously to herself—“If he really loves me,” she inwardly uttered a thou-

sand times a day, “he will still prove himself worthy of me. My father will overlook his past errors, when he finds him stedfast in amendment,—he has to pass through an ordeal in the temptations of the world; and if he comes off victorious, we may yet be happy—ah yes, more happy for this sad interruption to our felicity.” Still she wished the ordeal could have fallen to her lot, rather than to his; and would have been contented to walk like Queen Emma, blindfolded, among burning ploughshares, could she have hoped, by such a test, to establish Hamilton’s innocence, and secure his constancy; but, alas for Catherine! neither with regard to one or the other, was she to have that satisfaction. A few days after her conversation with her father, she saw the indefatigable Mally Garbutt’s red cloak waving in the wind, and foreboding, by her approach, a letter from Hamilton; she hastened up stairs to avoid alike the interminable gossip of the

bearer, and the betrayal of her own agitation. Well was it for her semblance of fortitude, that she thus received it alone!—well was it for her father's peace, deeply ruffled as it already was, by the sight of his daughter's silent disquietudes, that he was spared, by his customary attendance at the visitation that day, the spectacle of her grief and despair, at its contents, as follows:—

“ I will not outrage your ears, dear Catherine, for as a friend I may surely, to the end of my existence, call you dear, with any repetition of those tender epithets and expressions, which, in last addressing you, I still felt I had a right to adopt! No; they would make the inconsistencies of my conduct appear still more inconsistent, and subject me still more strongly to the charge of insincerity; when, alas, sincerity is the sole basis on which I can establish any thing like a hope of pardon for my conduct. O, Catherine, I am overwhelmed with shame, as I write to entreat you to recall the affection

with which you have honored me, the continuance of which I so earnestly implored, only one short week since, and which I now feel I ought to be contented to relinquish; not because I do not reciprocate it, for Heaven is my witness, you were never dearer to me than at this moment!—not because I do not value it, for every thing else that I possess appears valueless without it!—but that I am not worthy to retain it, and can no longer make the possession of it conducive, as when I last wrote, I was still fondly hoping, to your happiness, as it assuredly would have been to my own. No, my lovely and gentle Catherine must, for her own peace, teach her affectionate heart to give up the image she had treasured there, and nursed among her own virtues, till she imagined the reflection of them belonged to itself. She must see me as I am, the slave of follies that I despise, betrayed into conduct that my soul abhors. But I am justly punished for giving in

to the appearance of guilt, and carrying unhappiness into the bosom of a respectable and worthy family. I am called on by worldly honor to make actual reparation for an injury apparently committed. There must be a victim, —I take the sacrifice upon myself, not because I can bear it best, but that it is decent in me to spare a woman the public degradation which the least appearance of desertion on my part, under circumstances of censure, would be certain to entail upon her.

“ O, Catherine, my respect for your purity is such that I cannot bear even to vindicate myself at the expense of it. Yet, when you hear me condemned, as I am aware you are not without those *friends* who will be ready enough to place my conduct in the most revolting point of view, let your sweet, native candour come to my aid, and remind you, that the man who idolizes virtue in your lovely form, cannot be deli-

berately capable of associating himself with vice, however gilded or titled its allurements.

“ What have I said !—O, Catherine, pity me, that so bitter a sarcasm should escape my pen, with such an association in my mind as the companion, perhaps, of my future life. Yes; I do indeed make a sacrifice at the shrine of honor ! Every way your father may rejoice in his penetration—but he is too good himself, to build any of his superiority upon the errors of another. He will pity my weakness, perhaps lament over what he may deem my wickedness; but I make what reparation is expected by the world, and desired by the party whom I have injured in its eyes. The sacrifice of every blissful prospect, of the happiness and respectability of all my future days, is surely enough in the scale of retribution, for a momentary intoxication of vanity, for I have not even the wretched excuse of calling it passion—an idle

search after enjoyment, in paths where only satiety and disgust are to be found.

“Farewell! Catherine—forget me, as unworthy of you, and be assured that, whatever happiness it was the vision of my heart to have secured to you, had our fates been united, separate, yours must, under any circumstances, be tranquil, and blest, compared to that of

“ARTHUR HAMILTON.”

However confused and incoherent the style of this letter, however inconsistent and contradictory the sentiments it expressed, Catherine comprehended but too clearly that its object was to renounce her, its effect to exhibit the writer either as a criminal or a dupe—he was evidently caught in some unworthy toils, whether of his own framing or of some more artful hand she sought not to consider, for she felt it would be little consolation to her to know.

“It is all finished,” she exclaimed, “never,

never ought I to wish our acquaintance to be renewed; no, not on any condition whatever. I ought to be thankful that he is no more to me than what my weak, confiding heart has made him! Oh, had he been indeed my husband how much more I might have had to suffer!" with tears that blinded, and sighs that suffocated her, she wrote her reply to his letter:—

“ I renounce the claim your generosity had given me upon your hand, because I am certain, in asking me to renounce it, you are actuated by some motive which would render my retaining it, injurious to your real duty, or imaginary honor. I renounce the affections which were my happiness and pride, because it should seem you cannot continue them to me, even in the modified degree which time and absence might produce, without injustice to another, of whose prior claim on them you ought not to have left me ignorant. I renounce *every thing*, but the interest I must, whilst memory and life

remain to me, take in your happiness, and well doing! Give me the consolation to learn, when your name may accidentally reach me, in the seclusion which I shall never more desire to emerge from, that it is coupled with good report; and remember that it is only by your sparing me the misery of having to blush for my attachment, as well as to weep over it, that you can prove henceforward to me that you ever really felt the esteem you have so often professed for

“CATHERINE NEVILLE.”

How opposite were Catherine's feelings as she sent away this letter, from those which had filled her breast with a delight she knew not how to define, when she addressed to Hamilton the first epistle she had ever written to any one except her sister. Now, as then, she counted the hours that must elapse before he could receive it, but when the time arrived, how

different was the agitation which overwhelmed her! it seemed as if she had signed her own sentence of abandonment and misery; yet she wept not more for herself, than in the fear that her very compliance with his wishes would make Hamilton unhappy.—

“ His good heart will reproach itself for the pangs he will see he has inflicted upon mine,” said she, “ I ought to have consoled him under our separation, not reproached him, for, after all, my letter did reproach him, and he is yet more unfortunate than I am, because he has self-reproach to contend against,—and yet, as far as I am concerned, he has nothing to blame himself for, the events, let them be what they may, that have plunged us both in to misery, occurred before he knew me, and since he has known me, I am certain, my own heart assures me, he has never entertained an unworthy thought, never committed a wrong against the affection he has so often told me, made

him as much a better as a happier man.—No, no;—me, individually, he has only dealt kindly and nobly by, and it is my sole consolation, that I can cherish the remembrance of his affection, without the mixture of any feeling more bitter than regret.”

Alas, poor Catherine was not long to enjoy this idea; Louisa Longcroft returned to the Hall, with her father, after a more lengthened stay in London than usual, on account of the press of parliamentary business, to which the great and unexpected transition in the affairs of Europe had suddenly given rise.—Anxious to ascertain the state of Catherine’s health and spirits, she presented herself at the Rectory the very day after her arrival at home. She was accompanied in her pony-phæton by Mr. Dacres, who took upon himself the office of charioteer, which had so long been exclusively filled by her Cousin Edward.

All the pleasure Catherine was capable of feeling, or rather, all that somewhat resembled pleasure, she felt on embracing Louisa; but she could not bring herself to welcome Mr. Dacres with any thing of the same cordiality, the thought that he had been referred to, as, in some measure, the umpire of her fate, that his report, however conscientiously given, had most probably decided it, the consciousness that he was acquainted with Hamilton's situation, and must, in all probability, conjecture her own feelings, all distressed her, and so evident was her agitation, that Mr. Dacres, in pity to it, turned away, and saying with a kindness of tone, which could not be mistaken, that he would, with her permission, go in search of Mr. Neville, whom he had seen at some little distance from the house as he came along—he left the young ladies to themselves.

Catherine's reception of Mr. Dacres had not escaped the observation of Louisa, who re-

marked upon it as soon as ever he closed the door.—

“Have I done any thing unpleasant to you, my dear Catherine,” said she, her color deepening as she spoke, “in bringing Mr. Dacres here?—I know he is a great favorite with your father, and I thought he was with you also.”

“And so he is,” said Catherine, in some confusion, “at least—that is, I respect him very much—but—I have not seen him for some time, and——” she paused—and wept—Louisa took her hand.—

“Come, my dear Catherine,” said she, “tell me the real cause of your coldness to Mr. Dacres;—or, let me guess it—is it not because your father told you he had asked his opinion respecting Colonel Hamilton?”

“And how should you know he did so?” interrogated Catherine, crimson with anger, which for a moment was a relief to the lassi-

tude of her general feelings. “ Surely if Mr. Dacres had nothing to say in favor of Colonel Hamilton, he had no occasion to promulgate any thing in his disfavor, to any one but those who consulted him,—in such cases, I believe, a breach of secrecy is generally considered a breach of honor.”

“ There was no breach of secrecy in this case,” said Louisa, mildly; “ and certainly no breach of honor; the fact is, that your father having appealed to Mr. Dacres, to procure him information respecting Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Dacres wrote to me on the subject, as likely to know something of it, and sure to give him all I knew candidly and without ——”

“ How unfortunate !” interrupted Catherine, with an expression which grieved Louisa, though she felt the injustice of it.

“ But why unfortunate, my dear Catherine ?” she continued in the most soothing tone. “ You did not wish your father to be de-

ceived, did you?—You did not wish to deceive yourself?—It was unfortunate that the truth should be of a displeasing nature, but surely not unfortunate that it should have been brought to light.”

“ Ah, Louisa,” exclaimed Catherine, “ you are wise and good; and you are kind too—always kind, but in this matter you argue coldly. You never liked Colonel Hamilton, and you cannot feel for my misery, and blighted hopes.”

“ But I do feel for them, my dear Catherine,” said Louisa, her eyes filling with tears as she spoke, “ and I have no dislike to Colonel Hamilton individually: but I abhor his conduct in one instance, and I think it the duty of every virtuous woman to shew her respect for the laws of society, the laws to which she owes more especially her own protection and happiness, by marked coldness to him who dares to infringe them either in heartless vanity or deli-

berate guilt; but it is too often the custom of our sex, to show our disapprobation only to the weaker vessel, who may be the sharer of his guilt; but she is first the dupe of his arts, and though there may be little excuse for her, there is yet greater condemnation for him."

"If you allude to Lady Charlotte Forsyth," said Catherine, "I must say, from what I have seen of her myself, it is at least as likely as not, that the artifices and allurements have all been on her side, and that Colonel Hamilton has nothing more to answer for, than the indulgence of his vanity, in being singled out as the object of her admiration; contemptible enough, I acknowledge, in a man so superior himself, and highly culpable, in being carried to a degree of publicity that outraged propriety, and caused uneasiness to Sir William Forsyth; but that occurred before I knew him, and a true and honorable attachment, would

have rescued him from the errors, which, I acknowledge, may hitherto have obscured his good qualities."

"My dear Catherine," said Louisa, "it pains me to say any thing to wound you under your present state of feeling, which, whatever you may think of my coldness, I do indeed most deeply sympathise in; but I must vindicate myself so far as to convince you that I had reason to doubt of Colonel Hamilton's principles being so far fixed, even under the influence of his attachment to you, as to afford me any hopes that I could conscientiously hold out of his eventually making you happy. You remember when Lady Charlotte Forsyth so imprudently, so indelicately came to Nethercross, and to this very house, alone."

"I do indeed," said Catherine, with a convulsive sigh.

"Well," continued Louisa, "I suppose, even to your unsuspecting observation, it was evident

that her object in so doing was to seek out Colonel Hamilton."

"I did indeed fear it," said Catherine, "and I think my father, too, suspected something of the same kind, after her departure."

"And what your dear, good father suspects, Catherine, is generally pretty evident to every one else; but in this case it was too certain. That foolish, chattering Mr. Halston, not that there is any harm in him, he is only ridiculous, but here he should have known how to hold his tongue,—when he went back to town, gave such an account of Colonel Hamilton's conversion, as he termed it, as roused her ladyship's jealousy; and she immediately set off to Harrowgate, under pretence of wishing to take the waters; and a few days after she diverged to Nethercross, and succeeded too well in drawing Colonel Hamilton again into her lures."

"Not then," said Catherine, agonised with feelings even more acute than she had yet ex-

perienced, “not then Louisa, you wrong him : he set off to London that very night, purposely to do away any reports that might arise to her ladyship’s disadvantage, if it should be said they were in the country together—and that was a duty incumbent upon him, you must allow, both to her, and to Sir William, as well as to himself.”

“He might mean it when he left the house,” said Louisa, “and it is but charitable to think so : but at any rate her ladyship’s artifices overpowered his good resolutions, for it is too certain that they went to Blackpool, in Lancashire, together, and were there almost all the time you thought him in town. Indeed, it is on that circumstance that Sir William Forsyth grounds his application for a divorce.”

“A divorce !” faintly repeated Catherine ;—her blood was congealed in her veins, and her head sunk upon Louisa’s shoulder. She had not lost consciousness, and in a few minutes Louisa’s tears dropping upon her damp forehead

recalled her to herself—"O, Louisa," she exclaimed, with a look of anguish inexpressible, "what a dreadful stroke this is for me to bear! but it will be salutary for me in the end—a divorce!—then all will be made public!—what a disgrace to him! O, Louisa, I do indeed now feel that you were right, and judicious and kind to me—and so was Mr. Dacres, and my dear father. I should have died of grief and shame had this transpired after I had become Colonel Hamilton's wife—and my dear father's silver hairs would have been brought with dishonor to the grave—but O, that Hamilton could have deceived me so! what a new, and unthought of pang! Ah, Louisa, had he fallen on the Field of Waterloo, and left me ignorant of this cruel stroke, I should have been comparatively happy! I should have reared his monument in my widowed heart, and I should have asked no consolation beyond the remembrance of what I deemed him,"—tears came to her aid; but after

a short pause she continued—"Then he will marry Lady Charlotte, and this is what he calls honor!"

"It is reparation," said Louisa, "and, I believe with him, it may be termed penance also—indeed, the rumour is, that Lady Charlotte, in a frantic fit of jealousy, obtained a written promise from him to marry her, should he be single, whenever time or circumstance might remove the obstacles then existing on her side to their union—that immediately after obtaining this promise, Lady Charlotte quarrelled with her *Femme de Chambre*, who was completely in her confidence, and that this woman, in revenge, flew to Sir William, and put him into possession of facts, which left him no choice between conniving at his own dishonor, or applying to the law to relieve him from the burthen of a wife, who had so guiltily and so grossly compromised it.—And now, my dear

Catherine, you see the situation in which I was placed when I received Mr. Dacres's letter,—how could I see my friend stand on a precipice, and represent it to her as firm footing for her happiness and good?—What would you have felt had you discovered all this afterwards? and even could it have been concealed from you, had Colonel Hamilton's own conduct been ever so irreproachable, you would always have had a determined enemy in Lady Charlotte, and she would have left no means untried to disturb your domestic peace—she was jealous of you from report, she hated you as soon as she saw you, her jealousy was heightened into revenge at Lady Blakeney's ball, and, even now, many do not hesitate to say, that the pretended quarrel between herself and her maid was entirely a preconcerted plan between them, to procure the divorce which should set her free from Sir William, and enable her to shew the

world that she retained sufficient influence over Colonel Hamilton for him to make her his wife as soon as opportunity might allow."

Catherine shuddered. "O, Louisa," said she, "how happy I have been hitherto! I have neither seen nor heard of crimes. I have read of them only as historical events, and even then they seemed to me more like the chimeras of ancient fable, than the awful facts I can now believe them—but how terrible to be taught the existence of guilt by those we love being the perpetrators of it! henceforth we will talk no more of Colonel Hamilton—it is my duty to forget him—make my humblest apologies to Mr. Dacres, for any appearance of resentment my reception of him this morning might betray—it was unjust, but I believe the unhappy are privileged to be unreasonable sometimes," she tried to smile, but the effort only shewed like a watery sunbeam one moment glancing on a frozen lake.

Louisa kissed her rigid cheek. "It is a sad trial," said she, "my poor Catherine! it is your first, and perhaps the heaviest you could have had to struggle with—but for your father's sake, for mine, for all our sakes, you will struggle with it, and you must ultimately overcome it."

Catherine was silent—for to overcome is to forget.

Whatever unhappiness Catherine had experienced, on account of Hamilton, was all light compared to the misery of knowing that he had deceived her, of fearing that he might be utterly unworthy. The thought that whilst her whole soul was devoted to him with the holiest affection, whilst his image stood perpetually before her, and made even his absence delightful communion with him, whilst she was every moment hoping that that same moment his spirit might be joined to hers in sacred sympathy, that even then he was profaning the language of love to another; the thought would in

any case have been afflicting, in this it was frightful. "How could he be happy for one moment!" she exclaimed, in the agony of her sorrow; "where were his heart and conscience! he knew how unhappy he had left me, he saw it—how could he forget me so immediately!—he knew how entirely I confided in his truth—how could he deceive me so!—how could he return to the sinful ways he had so often pretended to rejoice at being extricated from! No! I never can esteem him more!"—But, alas! it is the misery of love that it will survive esteem—and to the mind of woman, brought up in retirement, nurtured in affection, there is something so terrible in the contemplation of vice, in ever so remote connection with an object once cherished, that she will try to view it in every palliating light, as long as possible, and even to shut her eyes against it altogether, rather than see it in its naked and hideous deformity. It was this cruel war of feelings, or

rather of feeling against judgment, that ravaged Catherine's heart, and added the excitement of indignation to the languor of disappointment.

There are no wounds so painful to bear, so difficult to cure, as those that are chafed by a sense of injustice or unkindness. It is not the loss of property that drives a sensitive mind to despair, or the privation of accustomed indulgences, or refinements which that loss may include—no, it is the altered aspect of nominal friends, the severe test that at once reduces their number, and changes their manner; it is the lacerations perpetually inflicted on the heart laid bare by fortune, that gradually subdues the spirit, sours the temper, and betrays the unfortunate into a state of fretful irritation, or reduces him to one of sullen apathy. “What is called and thought a hardship,” says Lord Edward Fitzgerald, in one of his beautiful and affectionate letters to his mother, “is nothing: one unhappy feeling is worse than a thousand years of it.”

But there is no feeling thoroughly unhappy, however mournful it may be, excepting it is mixed up with remorse or resentment : we weep at parting with our friends, but it is not absence that can sever hearts, and those who part in love, are sustained by hope. Even the grave, desolating as is the grief with which we mourn those whom it may hide from our sight, yet inspires a sublime and holy consolation in the sweet remembrance of duties well performed, tender offices mutually rendered and received ; every thing that is the result of natural causes, every thing that is the immediate dispensation of Heaven, may be endured with that temperate grief which admits time and reason for its physicians ; but the wounded spirit preys upon itself, and every day increases its sufferings in weakening its resources. So it was with Catherine—she made an effort to appear what she had been, but was not. She attended, as before, to her domestic duties, but—

—————"in every act
 Pertaining to her house affairs, appeared
 The careless stillness of a thinking mind
 Self-occupied ; to which all outward things
 Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
 But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
 No heaving of the heart."——

And it was her father's misery to see her fade away before his eyes, without complaining, and without any visible disease. Alas ! how many whom nature meant for devoted, loving wives, and tender mothers, thus drop into the grave—victims

—————"of silent grief
 And keen heart's anguish,—of itself ashamed
 Yet obstinately cherishing itself."——

Yes, the martyr at the stake excites the pity of the horror-stricken multitude, and is supported by the glory of the cause, that converts a few short pangs into eternal triumph ; but the martyr to wounded feeling drags on an existence of years in anguish unguessed at, which turns all nature into one dreary blank and renders the

continuance of life only a lingering, daily death.

Mr. Neville's grief, at beholding the total wreck of Catherine's happiness, was increased by the thought that it was himself who had exposed it to the storm which had proved so fatal to it. He blamed himself for having seen her intimacy with Colonel Hamilton increase to a pitch that he might have known must, to a mind ardent as hers, be fraught with consequences either favorable or unfavorable to her future tranquillity. He lamented the misfortune of any part of Colonel Hamilton's character being so at variance with his better qualities, that it was impossible to temporize between not eschewing the evil, in the hope of retaining the good, and when he considered the narrow circle, and humble attainments of even the most respectable class of his parishioners, he feared that years might elapse before chance should throw in their way any other associate likely to efface,

or in the smallest degree weaken the impression Hamilton's manners, attainments and knowledge of the world had made upon her warm and confiding heart.

These thoughts perpetually preying upon his mind, and perpetually renewed by the sight of Catherine, herself, pale, silent; her needle ever in her hand, her books unopened, her pianoforte untouched, at last began to affect his health; his appetite declined, his step became less firm, his voice tremulous, and Catherine found but too ready excuses for tears in the anxiety which his altered looks awakened, and with which she endeavoured to account to Mr. and Mrs. Barton for her own dejection: a dejection in which they not only tenderly, tremblingly, anxiously sympathised, from their own interest in its cause, but which seemed to sadden all the village—the old missed Catherine's sweet voice of kindness, in their cottages, and shook their heads at one another as they reiterated every

Sunday, the remark, "Parson looks sadly—I *thowt* as I seed him get into the pulpit that he was a breaking fast,"—and the young missed her smiles, and her enquiries after their *learning* and their health. A silent awe seemed to seize them, as they glanced at her pale and serious countenance as they passed; and the little girls who came at their accustomed hour to the back-door, for milk, involuntarily set their jugs down softly, and scarcely spoke above a whisper, fearing to disturb the stillness, which, young as they were, they yet could not but associate with something of suffering and sorrow.

Not only in Nethercross itself, but in all the social villages around, was the health of the Rector and his daughter the frequent subject of earnest enquiry, which made Mrs. Pugh, junior, feel herself of no little importance, as she was continually referred to as the fountain-head of information on the subject, as Mr. Neville had, to satisfy Catherine, consented to submit his pulse daily

to the critical touch of Mr. Pugh's digits, on condition of Catherine allowing the same enquiry to be instituted with respect to hers. Fanny generally called, herself, every morning for a bulletin, and frequently returned home in tears, which she sought occasionally to disperse, by looking in the day-book to see how many draughts were ordered; for the Nevilles were too considerate and neighbourly, not to submit to be, what in the familiar phraseology of the sons of Galen is termed "very good patients."

CHAPTER II.

FRESH ARRANGEMENTS.

THE Autumn is a season which peculiarly addresses itself to the heart; and its tawny leaves and glowing skies, may be connected with ideas of either joy or sorrow, according to the frame of mind in which they are contemplated. To the healthy and the happy there is some-

thing inexpressibly delightful in listening to the last song of the birds, and in catching all that may remain of summer, in the lengthened evening walk,

———“ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous,”

in viewing the safe housing of the harvest, which, by the blessed providence of God, is to sustain his creatures throughout the winter; in bracing up the nerves, to bear the sharp, yet wholesome severity of that social season; and in anticipating the pleasures of the blazing hearth, which is best appreciated when first beheld as a chilly evening succeeds a day of cloudless skies, tinged

“With a peculiar blue,”

and ending in all the glories of crimson and gold, which makes an autumnal sun-set one of nature's grandest pageants.

But to the sorrowful and the sick, the autumn presents only mournful and affecting images. They read their own decline in that of "the pale descending year," every leaf that

"Incessant rustles from the mournful grove
And slowly circles through the waving air,"

seems to tell them of some vanished pleasure, some deceptive hope ; they see all nature in decay, like their own happiness ; and despairingly behold the approach of a still more dreary and lengthened season, through which they scarcely have strength or wish to struggle. Under this withering aspect did Autumn appear for the first time to Catherine, as she assisted her father, one wet morning, late in October, to his chair, near the window ; a place which he loved, because from it he could see the spire of the little church, for so many years the scene of his most important duties, and discern the simple urn which marked the spot where the remains

of his beloved wife were interred; and where he felt it more than probable, his own would shortly be laid beside them.

To a mind at ease, and possessing resources within itself, the face of nature can never, even in its most discouraging aspects, have any dispiriting influence. Catherine had spent many a rainy day entirely alone, not only without the expectation of a visitor, but almost without the possibility of one. Nevertheless, to her all the "skiey influences," were sweet; and the pattering of the drops from the branches, the chirping of the swallows safe under the shelter of the eaves, the paddling of the ducks in the wet they loved so well, joined to the refreshing sweetness, which showers in the country, always give the air, and the anticipation of the next day's sunshine, and deepened verdure, were enough to make her almost rejoice in the temporary confinement to the house, which left her without an excuse of being otherwise than

industrious.—But now all was changed—the dreariness from without, seemed to tell her that on herself alone she must depend for every thing of comfort ; and when she looked at her father's sickly countenance, and considered how much the winter, which seemed prematurely setting in, might try a frame already so broken and exhausted, she feared even to think of the spring, which might find her a lonely, self-accusing orphan—self-accusing indeed ; for a hectic flush crimsoned her pallid cheek, and her eyes were dimmed with tears, as she surveyed him, and felt that anxiety for her health, and sympathy in her sorrows, were the original causes of the complaint which now threatened to deprive her of him entirely. She was roused from her painful reverie by the well known sound of Mally Garbutt's pattens, and she went to the door herself, to tell the poor old woman to come in, and get her cloak dried, and herself refreshed, by the kitchen fire. Mally first acquitted her-

self of her trust, in delivering a letter for Mr. Neville, with the "London post-mark on it, and nothing to pay," added Mally; but not in the exulting tones with which she brought Hamilton's first letter to the Rectory; for though this also was "a very handsome letter, with a power of wax upon it, and a fine seal," yet she felt, from the settled gravity of Catherine's countenance, that it was not one of *the* letters which she had so often been rewarded for bringing. Nevertheless, Mally's sensibility on the occasion was not such as to interfere either with her loquaciousness or her appetite; she therefore gladly accepted Catherine's invitation, to take a seat on the *long-settle* in the chimney-corner, where she might indulge both; for an hour or two sooner or later in the delivery of the Nethercross letters, was never deemed a matter of importance enough to be worth a calculation.

Catherine was glad to take the letter to her

father herself; for in the country, a letter is an event; and that day in particular, it seemed to come most opportunely, to give a new turn to the conversation, which had of late, been a little more than a reiteration of anxious enquiries after each other's health. Mr. Neville opened the letter;—in doing so, a bank-post bill dropped out:—he took it up;—“Five hundred pounds!” he exclaimed, with some surprise, as he glanced his eye over it,—“A gift to the 'York Infirmary, I suppose,” he added, as he laid it on the table, with his usual placid quietness. Whilst he read, a smile of pleasure illumined his features, and touched them with an expression of benevolence, so natural to them—“It is, indeed a gift,” said he, “and a noble one.—We have no reason, my dear Catherine, to be ashamed of being ourselves the objects of a charity so kindly and delicately expressed, and God forbid that any false pride on my part, should interfere with a benefit that may purchase health, and cheerfulness for my child.”

—He put the letter into Catherine's hand as he spoke, and she bent her eyes over it to hide the tears which sprung into them at the contrast of a parent's love, with the transient partiality of a heartless man of fashion; she also rejoiced with grateful delight, as she anticipated the amendment to her father's health and spirits, which might accrue from his acceptance of the boon, proffered with equal respect and feeling in the following lines.—

“ A friend who owes Mr. Neville obligations which no money can ever repay, has heard with great regret, of his severe and prolonged illness; and, as it appears highly probable, from the description of its attendant symptoms, that his disease might be greatly palliated, and even entirely removed by wintering in a warmer climate, he has taken the liberty, which he trusts to Mr. Neville's own warm and generous feelings to excuse, of sending a bank bill, which may defray the expense of a journey to the South of France, or any other

part of the Continent that Mr. Neville may deem most eligible for the restoration of his own health and that of his daughter, which his friend has the additional sorrow to learn has been much effected by her anxious attendance on her father."

"From whom can it be?" was Catherine's natural exclamation, as she endeavoured to discover some peculiarity in the characters, which might enable her to trace the writer.— "It is not Colonel Hamilton's hand," said she, and she could not suppress the sigh that swelled her bosom, as she uttered his name.

"No," said her father, "certainly not—he would not venture to offer me an obligation which, I am afraid, from him, I should not have humility enough to forgive.—No; I feel assured that it is from some one more worthy, ——" he paused, but "the hectic of a moment" faded from his cheek, and he added,— "at any rate from some quarter where I need

not blush to owe a kindness," Catherine sighed again—but it was inaudibly; and the conversation soon took a less painful turn.

Mr. Neville had indeed no scruples of pride or false delicacy to stand in the way of his accepting a gift, which he felt to be offered in the spirit of esteem and kindness, and which he knew could only have been sent to him by a person, to whose wealth it would be a scarcely perceptible diminution. His conjecture as to the source from whence it came instantly rested on Lord Hervey, and he knew that to a character like his, the luxury of doing good was the highest gratification his large possessions could afford him. Catherine agreed with her father as to the probability of this amiable young nobleman being their secret benefactor, and whilst she could not hide from her heart, how much more delightful it would have been to have owed a benefit to Hamilton, could he have offered it with hands equally

pure, she yet was sufficiently just to acknowledge that the debt of gratitude might be safely incurred of Lord Hervey, without one feeling of humiliation or anxiety.

The rainy day passed away in imaginary rambles, not—

“O'er the vine-covered hills, and gay regions of France,”

or to making any stay in that country, Mr. Neville professed at once his disinclination; but across the snow-capped heights of Mount Cenis, to the lovely Vales of Piedmont; a region, to which the sympathies of Mr. Neville had long been attracted by some of the most sacred duties of his profession, as well as by the suggestions of an imagination, delighting in the sublime and unsophisticated of Nature.

For many years Mr. Neville had been in the habit of correspondence with the venerable Amaud, pastor of a little flock of the Protestants, known by the name of Waldenses, in the Vallies

of Piedmont. Pitying the persecutions under which this band of primitive Christians had labored for centuries, and admiring the firmness which had enabled them to sustain the purity of their faith against every storm and every lure that could be opposed to it, Mr. Neville had originally introduced himself by letter to his brother shepherd, in the year 1794 when a general massacre of these unoffending and persecuted people was planned by the fanaticism of the Piedmontese Catholics.

On that dreadful occasion, urged by christian sympathy, and a spirit of philanthropy that knew no distinction of nations, Mr. Neville not only poured forth the most pious exhortations and consolations to his clerical brethren, who had the affliction to see their flocks smitten with the sword, and scattered abroad in the wilderness, but exerted himself so effectually in pleading their cause, even from his obscure retreat, to that admirable scion of the Estab-

lished Church of England, "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," that he had the gratification of procuring from it, as a body, and from many of its members individually, aids which his own moderate income would not allow him to supply, without encroaching on the portion of it which he peculiarly allotted to the relief of the poor who came within his own cognizance.

Under the administration of Napoleon, the Waldenses enjoyed comparative tranquillity, being placed by him, as long as Piedmont was subjected to France, on a footing with his other subjects; Mr. Neville, as ready to "rejoice with those that do rejoice," as to "weep with those that weep," was among the first to congratulate the Minister of St. Etienne upon the sunshine that had succeeded to the storms which had first introduced them to each other; and their correspondence, from that time, became the vehicle of religious instruction, varied, occasionally, with learned criticisms, and remarks on

general literature. A people, however, whose faith had for five centuries been subjected to all the trials which ignorance and cruelty were able to devise, could not reckon on any long interval of repose.

The restoration of the King of Sardinia to his throne, after the downfall of Napoleon, at once subjected the Waldenses to his government, and to the superstition, and its invariable attendant, persecution, with which that monarch, as far as he had the power, would have plunged Europe into all the evils of the darkest ages. Mr. Neville had soon the pain of hearing, from all quarters, of the unhappy condition into which the Waldenses were once more plunged by the unjust imposts they were made to pay, the obstacles thrown in the way of their following their lawful callings, in stealing their children, and separating their tenderest ties; the treacheries practised on the families, and their restraints laid on their religious worship.

It was in order to plead again their cause, to

those who had the power of ameliorating some of their afflictions, that Mr. Neville had thought of visiting London during Catherine's stay there; and it was precisely at the moment when his sympathy in the sufferings of these persecuted people was roused afresh, by an affecting description of them from Arnaud, that he received, as it were from the immediate hand of Providence, the means of ministering in some degree to their wants, and cheering them by his personal consolations. No wonder then that Switzerland instantly rose to his imagination, and decided his resolves.

“I will divide this sum, my dear Catherine,” said he, “this sum, so kindly, I may say so providentially bestowed, with those whose necessity is far greater than ours. Two hundred and fifty pounds will fully defray all the expenses of our humble mode of travelling and living, for six months; the other two hundred and fifty shall go among my brethren in the

mountains, in whose fastnesses their ancestors have so often entrenched themselves, firm in their faith, against the combined evils of fire, sword, and famine, O, my child! the very existence of a band of saints, under such circumstances, is one of the standing miracles that sufficiently attest the divine origin of the religion which has brought them forth!—yes, my dear Catherine, we will go—I am impatient to set off—I feel better at the thought—and my soul's health, at any rate, will be improved and strengthened by the conversation of these holy men, who are contented to deny themselves every thing for the Cross of Christ—and you my dearest,” and he kissed her cheek, as pale and dewy as an April rose,—“you will learn how to subdue sorrows of a nature comparatively trivial, when you see the magnanimity with which the heaviest afflictions may be borne in a righteous cause.”

Catherine's heart was too full to reply. Gra-

itude that she still preserved her father, and hope that this journey, undertaken with so laudable an object in view, might contribute to her retaining the invaluable blessing of his love for many years, were, however, her predominant feelings. The remainder of the evening was passed in looking over maps, drawing out routs, making calculations, and such other ingenious artifices as anticipation wisely suggests to hope that he may secure a certain portion of pleasure, from the possibility of disappointment.

The next morning Catherine had the delight of seeing her father come down to breakfast nearly at the accustomed hour, which his feebleness had for some days before obliged him to make considerably later; and he, also, felt his soul cheered by the smile with which she greeted him, and which wore more of its natural radiance than he had seen for many weeks.

Louisa Longcroft rarely let a day pass with-

out calling at the Rectory, and she had now the gratification of seeing it exhibit something of its wonted cheerfulness,—for old Peter’s muscles relaxed as he stood at the head of the ponies, and blooming Margaret smirked and curtsied, wrinkled Rachel smoothed her apron and her forehead, and the “better thank you ma’am, and Miss Catherine’s better too, thank God!” sufficiently explained the brightened state of the little household. Sincerely did Louisa rejoice at the gleam of cheerfulness that flitted across Catherine’s countenance, as she detailed the event of the preceding evening, and expressed her hopes of the benefit their projected journey might produce to her father’s health.

“And on yours, my dear Catherine,” said Louisa, affectionately, “remember, one is bound up with the other;” but seeing the expression of sadness returning over Catherine’s features, she directed her conversation to Mr. Dacres, who had, as usual, accompanied her, and whose

almost daily visits and respectful attentions to Mr. Neville, during his illness, had erased from Catherine's mind whatever unpleasant feeling had, at the first commencement of his intimacy, interfered, in spite of her more candid judgment, with her sincere admiration of his character. He now readily offered to do occasional duty for Mr. Neville, during his absence, and also to provide him with a young man of a pious and humble turn of mind, who would most thankfully accept the office of his curate for that time.

The Rector gladly acceded to these proposals. "I should not feel happy," said he, "in extending my labors abroad, if I left my little flock exposed to heresies, or neglect at home; but under your care I shall have no fear but that they will do well with the young man you speak of and know. He shall be my almoner also, for I would not leave the body uncared for—it is, at any rate, the tenement of the soul,

and that the one may be in a state for instruction, the other ought at least to be kept in habitable repair."

"You must leave me your sermons, Sir," said Mr. Dacres, with a smile, "that I may go to work with the same tools."

"No, Sir," said the Rector, "we think too much alike, I am happy to say, for that to be necessary. The belief in the sole Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ as one and the same with the Eternal Jehovah, our Creator, Redeemer and Regenerator, the gradual progress of our regenerate life, the necessity of a perfect union of faith, charity and good works, the acknowledgment that all good comes from the Lord; but that we are called upon to stretch forth our own hands for the cup he graciously extends towards us; to exert, as from ourselves, that which he enables us to receive, the wonders of his providence, the treasures of his love, the amazing greatness of our progressive destination

from the cares, sorrows and trials of this world, to the eternal glories and infinite varieties, and endless uses of the next. Those are the themes that I have always found to command attention from the pulpit, as they form subjects of perpetual and even delightful contemplation in the closet. But this would be nothing did they not also fructify in the life, and bring forth those fruits of the spirit which may lead even the lowliest and most ignorant of my flock finally into the folds of everlasting rest."

The Rector, warming as he spoke, communicated his fervour to his auditors, for Louisa was naturally of a devout, enquiring turn of mind, and Mr. Dacres, early relinquishing the few ambitious hopes which had at first urged him to struggle for a place in society accordant with his talents and early expectations, had long devoted all his learning and energies to the sacred cause to which he felt himself called by a mandate compared to which the commands of

the most powerful earthly potentate would have appeared but as “ tinkling brass, or a sounding cymbal.” As Mr. Longcroft was from home, Louisa was easily prevailed on to stay and dine at the Rectory, and Mr. Dacres remaining with her, as a matter of agreeable necessity, the day glided away in the peaceful interchange of congenial sentiments, until the reddening west proclaimed that it was time to separate.

“ Surely Louisa is happy !” thought Catherine, whilst she pensively stood at the window to receive her parting smile, as Mr. Dacres took the reins, “ she can never be very unhappy, if she be attached to Mr. Dacres ; for even if her father should oppose her wishes, she would never have to blush for having entertained them.”

Alas ! for poor Catherine—a thousand times a day, did an accidental word, an involuntary association, renew the same conflict in her bosom, of love, resentment, pity, indignation,

excuses, fond recollections, every thing that could wound by opposition, torment by contrariety! Nor was it any consolation to her to think of going to other climes, except as far as her father's health might be benefitted—for herself she was reckless, and had no wish but to remain where she was, to die there, and to think that when Hamilton should hear of her death he would recal to his remembrance the spot, near her mother's grave, where he would know she must be buried, and might drop a tear to the memory of her whose heart he had broken.

No—too surely no lover ever yet wished for change of scene!—there is no change of scene to those who deeply, intensely love—for outward objects are unmarked by them, and within, however the position of the altar may be changed, the idol is the same, the sacrifice of devotedness and misery unaltered.

Catherine, indeed, thought with grief and repugnance of quitting the beloved spot where

she had first known Hamilton, where every thing seemed connected with him. In leaving the scenes he knew, she seemed to estrange herself from him, as he had already estranged himself from her; to deprive herself of the imaginary bond which might still hold them together.

“ Here he knows every room, every walk, and the occupations of every day and every hour,” she said to herself, “ if he should ever think of me, and sure I am he does think of me, he can see me exactly as he has seen me, and that certainty seems to bring us together once more. Ah, there are times when I think of him with such intensity !” — poor Catherine ! when did she not think of him thus — “ that I am certain our spirits are joined, our guardian angels are in communion together, and bring them nearer to each other. Oh, it must be, that he is, at such moments, in a state of purity and good, or there could not be that sympathy be-

tween us. Alas! alas! unhappy that I am, to think how many moments there may be in which I ought to shrink, and should shrink from any communion with him who might have been my beloved guide, my best friend, my happiness, my pride, my soul's eternal companion!"

Floods of tears followed this passionate apostrophe, succeeded by langour and exhaustion, which sent all the little blood left in her pale cheek, to aid the feeble action of her heart, which was still quickened by starts, as some painful remembrance, some agonising anticipation crossed it. Nor let this picture be thought overcharged;—no—no daily life affords but too many prototypes of it, too many men who would feel conscience stricken at the most distant thought of seduction, incur virtually the guilt of murder, if in that term the abridgment of human life, by mental suffering, may be included. Too many mothers, who have beheld once blooming

and beloved daughters sink into the grave, from some silent grief hidden even from conjecture ! too many sisters, who have seen the affectionate friend, and companion of their laughing hours, alter, droop, and die, without one audible, one perceptible complaint, could attest the sad result of sorrows endured in secret, tears traced but by the quickened eye of anxious affection, sighs heard only by the listening ear of watchful apprehension. Those who feel the most deeply are always most careful to conceal their feelings—the same sensibility, the same warm and tender feeling, that lays their own heart open to suffering, renders them always most desirous of guarding the hearts they love from any share in it ; and whenever Catherine found that her griefs still admitted of aggravation, it was when she feared that, however she might attempt to hide them, they were still a subject of affliction to her affectionate sister and her husband, as well as to Louisa Longcroft, who,

she was too well aware, guessed her every thought and every sentiment.

The idea that she could, at any rate, nurse her unhappiness, at a distance, without imparting it to others, would have reconciled her to leaving her beloved haunts, for a time, had it not been for the reflection so often made, that in leaving them she separated herself from objects with which she might be associated in the mind of Hamilton. “He will never think of Nethercross, when he knows we are no longer here, and in not being able to identify my image with the scenes which may surround me I shall only come before him as a flitting shadow, fainter and fainter, till neither form nor trace of the past remain. Alas ! perhaps even now that may be the case, forsaken and forgotten.—Ah, if my dear father should languish and die in a foreign land, I have only to pray that the Almighty will not suffer me to linger after him—would that the same grave might receive us

both !—would that it had done so twelve months ago ; before I had seen his cheek blanched, and his eye dimmed with my sorrows.”

Then came the thought, would Hamilton grieve if he heard of her departure ?—would he weep if he heard of her death ?—and weeping herself afresh in the contrariety of her feelings, she, for the first time in her life, gave vent to them in verse ; and, whilst her tears dropped upon the paper, wrote a few simple lines, which she folded up and placed within the leaves of a small volume of Tomson’s Poems, wherein he had, one evening, marked the passages that pleased him best—more especially in his favorite pieces, the “ Castle of Indolence,” and the pretty “ dirge” over Fidele, in Cymbeline.—This volume she resolved to leave with Rachel, wrapped up, and directed for him, in case of any thing happening to her, upon the road, or during the time of her exile, as she still termed it to herself ; and the gloomy presentiments

with which she regarded it, were too evident in the melancholy pathos of her short but touching "Farewell!"

* "Forsaken heart! thy lonely griefs conceal,
Deep in the inmost foldings of thy core!
There let them silent rest, nor e'er reveal
The name beloved, till life shall throb no more.

Soon will thy conflicts cease! thy last sad sigh,
Alike thy sufferings and thy wrongs shall tell—
Alas! how sweet, how easy 'twere to die,
But for that fatal, fatal word, farewell!

Alas! how sweet, how easy 'twere to die,
But for that fatal, fatal word farewell!

* The above words have been adapted to a beautiful Melody, by Alexander Lee, and Published by Z. T. PURDAY, Holborn.

CHAPTER III.

LEAVING HOME.

WHEN once the Rector had made up his mind to any thing, he was always prompt in the execution of it;—the day of departure was therefore fixed for the beginning of the ensuing week, and the intervening time appeared far too short for half the affectionate arrangements Catherine had to make for all the objects of her care, during her absence. Mr. and Mrs.

Barton and the children were immediately sent for, that they might spend together the brief period that remained; and little Mrs. Pugh called regularly every day with an important face of apology, when she made her visits a few minutes shorter than usual on the plea, that—
“ People with families to look after, had always so many little things to do.”

Mr. Pugh, faithful to the last, in his attendance, stood armed at the door of the post-chaise with draughts in each hand, “ To be taken as before,” and as he put them into the pockets of the chaise, made the *amende honorable* with his conscience, by giving his candid opinion to Mr. Neville, that when they were finished, it might not be necessary to “ repeat the dose.”

We will pass over all the bustle of setting off, the tears and farewells at parting.— Rachel crammed the chaise as full of eatables as if it were going to traverse the Desarts of Siberia, instead of the great North Road.—

Poor Mrs. Barton was almost fainting with grief and apprehension, when she thought of her dear father and sister having to cross and recross the sea, and Mount Cenis, before she should see them again; the older parishioners wept to see their good pastor set off, at his time of life, with "Miss Catherine" for "foreign parts," and were sure neither of them would ever live to come back again; whilst the young ones stared in respectful silence at the luggage and the preparations, with now and then a sly smile at Margaret, who, it had been decided by Mrs. Barton, must accompany her master and young mistress; to both of whom, indeed, her cheerful and affectionate attentions were almost indispensable; and who, wrapped up warm in a new travelling cloak, and divided between joy and fear, grasped the sides of the dickey, where she was perched, with all her strength, having never before ridden in any thing more exalted than a cart at the harvests-home. At

length the door was closed, the last adieu uttered out of the window, the glasses drawn up—Catherine's face hidden in her handkerchief, the postilion's whip cracked, the horses started forward, and the travellers were off for the Continent.

As we are writing a novel and not a tour, though according to the modern mode of manufacturing the articles, there is sometimes not much difference between them, we shall not follow our travellers step by step, through a route made sad to each, by parental anxiety on one side, and unavailing regrets on the other.

Catherine had entreated her father to avoid going through London, and he, anxious to study her slightest wish, took the way of Brighton to Dieppe, and shunning the French Capital, the very thought of the gaieties of which, at such a time, was repugnant to him, proceeding by Beauvais and Rheims, to Chalons-

Sur-Marne and Lyons, where they rested a few days to recruit, for travelling seemed thus far to do little for either the health or spirits of the travellers.

Mr. Neville felt some gratification in examining the remnants of antiquity, with which the City of Lyons and its environs abound, but, faithful to his calling, he derived the chief interest of his stay from his enquiries into the state of religious discipline in the place, where a larger proportion of Protestants are to be found than in any other part of France; and his Christian zeal increasing as he approached the spots that had long excited so large, and disinterested a portion of it, he became anxious to reach the vallies of Piedmont, ere the season should be so far advanced, as to render the crossing of Mount Cenis dangerous, if not impracticable. Accordingly, the day after the Sabbath, they resumed their route; for Mr. Neville considered all *unnecessary* travelling on

that day, as including as great breach of it, as if it was passed in manual labor, or any other worldly pursuit ; and he could not but admire the inconsistency of some refined consciences, who could deplore, as it is to be deplored, the spectacle of masons and carpenters, laboring at their avocations on the seventh day ; when they were perhaps at the same time pressing both man and beast themselves into their own service, by wantonly choosing to continue their migrations on the day, when both were commanded to rest from their labour, and this with rarely any better excuse, than that they did not know what else to do with themselves.

How would Catherine, under happier circumstances, have enjoyed the beautiful and varied scenery that began to unfold itself as they approached the Alps !—but now, alas ! hill and valley,—torrent and mountain, only seemed to

make her more and more conscious of her separation from Hamilton,—and

“To drag at each remove a lengthening chain,”

for though she had relinquished all hope of happiness with him, herself she had not therefore ceased to be interested in his welfare, and above all in his honor and reputation—and sometimes she would exclaim in the grief of her heart—“his name will never reach me in these Alpine solitudes—and it is well!—I shall be spared the misery of hearing it coupled with obloquy and reproach.” The grandeur, the sublimity, of Mount Cenis, the novelty of the passage across it, and the interest inspired by the approach to the districts where they meant to take up their abode for many weeks, perhaps months, roused Catherine, however, from her melancholy abstraction, and her father from the

langour of the illness which still preyed upon him—his enthusiasm awakened amid scenes dear alike to the historian and the poet—Virgil, and Salius Italicus, presented many an appropriate passage to his memory; and when he could withdraw his eyes from the stupendous features of the view, and the somewhat startling wildness of the passes, he eagerly searched his Polybius, and Livy—for he had been careful to provide himself with half-a-dozen of his favorite authors, as travelling companions,—for the account of the progress of Hannibal over the same Alps, which he himself was now, even to his own amazement, so unexpectedly exploring.

Rugged, dreary, and desolate, was the way which conducted to the valley where the Waldenses,—the descendants of the pure and primitive Church of Christ, to which every other Protestant Church in Europe owes its origin; still retain their humble possessions—fenced in by rocks, and guarded by torrents; it should

seem that nature herself had resolved to preserve them from the oppressors, with whom even their poverty and humility were no plea to be left in the retirement their situation promised them;—their peace, their piety, would of itself have insured to them. When, however, these craggy defiles were passed, a more pleasing scene presented itself, in the pretty village of St. Etienne, between Augrognna and La Torre, and which combined the natural beauties of the one, with the more sublime features of the other. It was to this village, that the steps of Mr. Neville were particularly directed; for it was with its pastor Arnaud, that he had for many years corresponded; the venerable man was a descendant of the celebrated Arnaud, under whose martial arm, and apostolic eloquence, “*La Glorieuse Rentrée des Vaudois dans leurs vallées,*” which he lived to describe and publish twenty years afterwards, was effected by an heroic band of eight hundred devoted

spirits, who, against the conjoined armies of France and Savoy, amounting to twenty-two thousand men, to use the simple, though energetic language of their leader, succeeded in opening a passage for themselves, through Savoy and Upper Dauphiny, putting their enemies continually to the rout, and at last miraculously recovering possession of the land of their inheritance; maintaining themselves in it sword in hand, and re-establishing therein the pure worship of God, which had been interdicted for the three years and a half before.

Never was a more lovely Alpine solitude beheld, than this pretty village: it was indeed "*una pianura fertile e graziosa*,"—The cottages were half hidden in the gardens and orchards, among which they stood, sheltered with stately chesnuts, and spreading mulberries; to the summits of which, the grateful tendrils of the vine aspired, and stretching from branch to branch, formed a luxuriant line of canopy between the

corn-fields and pastures, which they intersected ; the ground was beautifully varied with gentle acclivities, and rising hills, which gradually swelled into a chain of lofty mountains, on whose snow-clad summits the sun shone with dazzling brightness, forming a sublime background to the scene ; whilst on the right, were masses of rock, piled upon one another, and over them rushed many streams from the torrent of Augrogna, fertilizing the valley with sparkling brooks, crossed by wooden bridges, and inviting the ever picturesque water-mill on their banks ; whilst on an eminence above, frowned the remains of a feudal castle, and on the opposite side arose the venerable church, overhung by the tremendous crag of Casteluzzo. It was this object that fixed Catherine's eyes.

“ Oh,” she exclaimed, “ it is like our own dear Nethercross ;” and, as if already infected with the *maladie du pays*, she burst into a flood of tears.—Margaret, who had long been trans-

planted from the outside of the vehicle to the inside, and beguiled alike the tedium and the dangers of the route with her knitting, made it a point of honor to follow her mistress's example, and sobbed most audibly.

“It is like it, indeed,” said Mr. Neville, “and let us hope we may find the same comfort within its sacred walls. Yes, to be sure, it is the very same thing, with that crag hanging over it; it is exactly as if Castleberg had prevailed on the genius of the Alps to bring it here to claim kindred with these primeval masses. The name too, has an affinity, Castleberg and *Castleluzzo*; singular enough. I doubt not it could be traced up to the same root. I wish I had brought my dictionary of derivations along with me.”

The declining sun was now throwing a crimson glow over the whole scene, which lent it a thousand new glories—the driver quickened his pace down a long and comparatively smooth

descent, as they drew near the village. Mr. Neville had taken precaution to send forward a peasant, who was going towards it, with notice to the Pastor, of their approach ; and almost before they thought the man could have had time to deliver the message, they saw the worthy minister advancing at a quick pace to meet them ; he carried in his hand an ivory-headed staff, on which he slightly leaned ; and his silver hairs, and black cloak, of the ancient short Geneva cut, floated together in the evening breeze, whilst his cheek, naturally pale, borrowed a temporary glow as well from the western sky, as from surprise and pleasure, at learning that a friend, whom he already greatly respected, through the medium of correspondence, should have come so far to strengthen their mutual good understanding, by personal intercourse.

No sooner did Mr. Neville feel assured that it was Arnaud himself, who was coming in such

haste to greet him, than he alighted from the chaise to meet, and reciprocate his salutation. It was a lovely and an apostolic sight, to see two men so venerable, so zealous, so simply minded, locked in each others' arms, in a truly Christian embrace. Mr. Neville, at length, disengaged himself, and was the first to speak.

“ My brother, and my friend,” said he, “ circumstances have unexpectedly occurred to me, which the weakness of my nature, shrinking from its allotted trials, has grieved over as afflictions—nevertheless, I cannot deem them altogether unfortunate; for through them it is, that I have been enabled to visit your sacred valleys, to become acquainted with yourself, to offer you my consolations for the trials with which you have been chastened, and afford you some trifle of relief, towards the necessities of your flock.”

The Alpine Pastor would have expressed his

thanks, but Mr. Neville affectionately interrupted him.

“My stay among you,” he continued, “will be of some continuance—therefore I will not be premature in my enquiries—permit me now, then, to introduce to you my daughter Catherine ; she is familiar with your name and your virtues.”

“As the daughter of so kind a friend, she is already dear to me,” said Arnaud, “and I doubt not but she will be equally so, for her own sake, when I come to know her worth.”

They now all proceeded towards the village, and arrived at the house of the minister, just as the last gleam of twilight gradually faded from the sky. As soon as the little party crossed the threshold, the venerable Arnaud placed his hand on Catherine’s head, and gave her his blessing, in the most impressive tones ; whilst she, dropping on her knee, and clasping her

hands in all the fervour of the devotion his piety inspired,—silently raised her prayer to heaven, that she might derive eternal benefit from the example of religion and purity, its dispensations had conducted her to witness:—he then extended his patriarchal benediction to Margaret, who received it with as much awe, as humility; and then gave the kiss of peace to his brother, according to the apostolic injunction; and thus the ceremony of welcome ended.

The worthy minister next introduced the different members of his family, to his guests. Alas! it was but the remnant of what it had once been; of his own children, not one remained to him,—of five sons, three had fallen in battle—one died in prison—and one with his wife and infant, was starved to death, in a cave, wherein he was forced to seek shelter, from an infuriated band of Catholics; his only daughter he was, at that time, with all the rest of the family, in mourning for; and all that remained

to him were four of her children, whom he now separately presented ; the younger two, Bernardin and Lolotte, a boy and girl, of twelve and thirteen years of age, stood one on each side of his elbow-chair ; Victor, an elder brother, of about seventeen, of a pale complexion, and serious though sweet cast of countenance, laid down his massy and antique folio, which bore for title:—“ *Historie Générale des Eglises Evangéliques des Valées de Piemonté,*” and coloured with all the engaging, modesty of youth, as his grandfather introduced him, as an aspirant for the honor of ordination in the sacred calling of his forefathers ; and lastly glided forward Mariette, the eldest of the little band of orphans, whom the miseries of war, and the oppression of intolerance, had cast upon their grandfather, for their sole support. From fifteen years of age, owing to the delicate state of her mother’s health, this lovely girl had been the guide of his house, the comfort and prop of his

declining years, and the instructress, almost the mother of her younger brothers and sister.—Yet was she not what she had been only a few short months before !—then, hope and joy sparkled in her eyes, and playful as the kid upon her native mountains, she delighted in all the duties that devolved upon her, whether it were to set out her grandfather's frugal board, with the produce of her dairy and garden, or to assist him in visiting his parishioners, or to follow her little flock of sheep and goats through the winding ascents by which they loved to seek their herbage, or to bring them safe home again, and place them in security for the night, or to take her wheel, and beguile its labours with the devotional strains of her ancestors, or to impart her little stores of knowledge to her sister and youngest brother, in their evening lessons, still every thing was a willingness and joy. Now she was pale and spiritless,—her voice scarcely rose above a whisper, and sighs, of which she

seemed unconscious, often interrupted her replies; for it was only to reply that her voice was heard. Her grandfather regarded her with tender pity, and spoke in faltering accents of her declining health. His expressions caught her ear, and rousing herself from her langour, she approached Catherine, and in an artless manner, offered her her services.

It was easy at one glance to see that the minister's house was not capable of containing such an addition to his own family; and the scantiness of its furniture presented another obstacle to the entertainment of guests. Everywhere, indeed, it bore the stamp of poverty, but it was poverty combined with that comfort which cleanliness, cheerfulness, affection and piety will give to the humblest habitation. The blazing logs of wood on the hearth threw a cheering light upon the walls, the tendrils of the vine interlaced with the clematis supplied the place of drapery or curtains to the wide casements, a

coarse straw mat, spread here and there on the brick floor, served for carpet and hearth rug, the table of walnut-tree wood was surrounded with chairs of the same material, and though it was covered with a home-spun cloth, which atoned by its whiteness for the coarseness of its texture, yet on that cloth were only spoons of pewter, rubbed, indeed, as bright as the character of the metal would allow, wooden trenchers, and crockery of the cheapest description.

The only effect this survey produced in Mr. Neville's mind, was to make him recollect, with somewhat of uneasiness, that silver, china, and a few favorite pieces of cut glass were to be seen upon his table; and he would almost have felt like Diogenes, who cast away his bowl, blushing to find himself in possession of a superfluity, had not the sight of a curious, old-fashioned clock, of elaborate workmanship, and a richly carved armoire, evidently of very antique date, reconciled him to the idea that even the

humblest have some comparative treasure, some remnant of better days, on which they love to look with somewhat of the pride of property.

Catherine was equally busy in comparing her silk pelisse, plain as it was in fashion, and sober in hue, her bonnet of fine straw, her lace veil, her handsome shawl, and her embroidered collar, the produce of some of her long fits of needle-work, with the coarse stuffs in which Mariette and Lolotte were habited, with no other ornament than their long hair, braided and tressed in the fashion of their country.

“I shall never bear,” thought she, “to see myself finer than my companions—to-morrow I will select all my very plainest dresses, and Margaret shall help me to alter them to the Piedmontese costume,—the difference between us will then, at any rate, be less conspicuous.”

Mariette meanwhile glided like a spirit round the table, placing on it rye bread, fresh butter, egg, cheese, and some small dried fish, which

was all her little stores afforded ;—nothing more but a bottle of wine was added to the repast, and the travellers found altogether abundantly sufficient to recruit their spirits, after the fatigues of the latter part of their journey. Mariette, in the interim, busied herself with arrangements for the future comfort of Mr. Neville, and his daughter. Fortunately, an adjoining cottage was at this time vacant, in consequence of the occupant, with his family, having removed to Turin; the furniture, though sumptuous compared to the minister's, insomuch as it comprised a tattered sofa, a remnant of carpet, two coloured drawings, in gilt frames, and a faded crimson curtain, which had not been thought worth removal—were therefore left behind, in the hope that some young couple might, one day, make altogether a bid for it—After a few minutes consultation, it was agreed that Mr. Neville, Catherine, and Margaret, should take possession of such rooms in this

cottage, as might be deemed most desirable; and Lolotte, on hearing the decision, immediately ran to get wood to make fires in the apartments.—Margaret went to assist her, and with much merriment of signs and words, rendered intelligible every now and then, by pointing to the things signified, their united exertions soon made every thing comfortable. Family worship was then performed—the greetings of the night exchanged, and Catherine kissed her father at the door of his room, close to her own, and very soon after, on a bed of beech-leaves, newly gathered, fragrant and soft, and covered with sheets white as the mountain snows, was lulled to sleep by the distant roar of the torrent of Augrogna.

CHAPTER IV.

DOMESTICATION ABROAD.

A VERY few days were sufficient to blend together, in friendly and unceremonious union, the families of the Rector of Nethercross, and the Pastor of St. Etienne; a stranger would have thought, on seeing them round the hospitable board, or blazing hearth, that they were knit together by bonds of consanguinity, or at least of long and familiar intimacy: the

joyous laugh of Lolotte as she strove to teach Margaret the household arrangements, in the *patois* of her native valleys, filled the house with the sounds of innocent hilarity; the discourse of Arnaud was a perpetual gratification to Mr. Neville; the sublime scenery unconsciously elevated the mind of Catherine into something like fortitude, which says—

“ To bear is to conquer our fates ”

and the rest of the family, with the exception of Mariette, whose dejection was always the same, were cheered by the return of their relatives and friends, from the more mountainous parts of the district, to shelter their flocks and herds in the valleys during the winter, which had now set in with some severity, but which the *weather-wise* pronounced was likely to be short, in proportion to its intensity. The mornings were beguiled with study and the evenings with simple occupations, such as

cutting out toys and figures in wood, carving models, and making small pieces of machinery. These however were recreations—all the business of the season was the acquirement of information. It was only in the winter that the schools were open, for at other times of the year the young people were too much scattered, by the pastoral nature of their occupations, to be able to congregate together for the purposes of instruction: now, however, they were thronged, and presented a most interesting spectacle of intellectual application, and craving after knowledge, even amid so many privations, and such excessive poverty, that some of the schools in the district had been of necessity closed, from the utter impossibility of affording the master any compensation for his time; though in many of the instances all that was required did not exceed in its annual amount the sum of twenty English shillings.—Yet beautiful was it to see the zeal by which the deficiencies

of this poverty were supplied; those who were fortunate enough to possess books, lent them to others who had none to transcribe; nay, so minutely were the benefits intended to be shared, that pamphlets and catechisms were frequently separated, and distributed in set portions for the more speedy service of the students. It was pleasing to behold the ministers themselves assisting in the instruction of their flocks, and the patient and tender catechising of the children, who were invariably prepared for their pastor's examination by their mothers or elder sisters, alike when watching their flocks in summer, or spinning by the fire in winter. The articles of their faith, the history of their church and people, the fiery trials and persecutions to which they had been subjected, the latter invariably however set forth with a spirit of Christian charity towards their oppressors, exhortations to maintain their religion, "pure and undefiled before God," to

adorn it with the graces of good life, and to keep "steadfast to the end," were the themes which the venerable Arnaud mingled with his instructions in the learned languages, in which he was thoroughly skilled. And delightful it was thus to see learning the handmaid of piety, and deference wait upon instruction.

Persecution in religion, like adversity in private life, knits those subjected to it, still more strongly together; and the pastors among the Waldenses, the support and comfort of their people in the hour of trial, were looked up to, in the brief periods of comparative serenity, as their tutors and friends, as well as their spiritual guides. Mr. Neville contrasted this duteous submission, and willingness to be instructed, with the cold indifference, the contemptuous criticisms of more luxurious congregations, begetting in return a mere lip-service and formal observance on the part of their ministers, thus estranged from all the sympa-

thies that ought to make their sacred avocations a labor of love; he contrasted also the pomp and indolence of spiritual dignitaries, under the enervating influence of wealth and perpetual ease, with the unremitting labors and scanty subsistence of the Waldensian Ministers. The parish of the venerable Arnaud extended over many miles of mountain and valley; crossed by torrents, impeded by rocks, exposed to imminent danger, from avalanches and floods: yet these districts he continually traversed, in the most inclement seasons on foot, for he could not afford other means of conveyance;—sometimes he went to preach to the remnant of a small band of parishioners, left among the mountains, in some almost inaccessible nook;—sometimes to console the sick, or the afflicted, in a distant valley, and incessantly above all, were his cares called forth to guard his people from the constant efforts of the Catholics to perplex their belief,—to seduce them

from the faith of their forefathers, and alternately to terrify them by threats of persecution, too often carried into effect in temporal things ; or to lead them away by the allurements of pleasure, and the cajolement of flattering promises. When these parochial visits were within moderate distance, Mr. Neville used to accompany his brother Arnaud, as he affectionately styled him ; but when they extended further, the good man would not permit him to do so ; and the state of cold and exhaustion, in which he himself too often returned, was painful evidence how far his exertions had been carried—but then, his grand-children hastened around him, with such affectionate attention, to revive his benumbed energies, that he soon recovered his wonted placid serenity.—Marianne had always a basin of warm milk ready for him ; Lolotte took his feet into her lap, to chafe them by the fire ;—Bernardine brought him his woollen wrapping-gown, and the rusty velvet

cap, which shaded his silver hairs, as it had done those of his father's ; and Victor gave him an account of the schools and religious events of the day.

Mr. Neville sometimes felt ashamed of the comparative ease of his own lot, " cast in pleasant places," as if he had been a bishop, when he listened to the privations and persecutions of the long-suffering people, whose trials and martyr-like endurance of them, had drawn him so far from the peaceful scene of action he had so seldom quitted, to become more intimately acquainted with them.

" It is, perhaps," said Mr. Neville, one evening as he sate in friendly conversation with his host, whilst Catherine and Mariette were working at one side of the table, Bernardin and Lollotte carving sheep and goats out of box-wood on the other, and Victor patiently transcribing from a Greek Testament beside them—" it is, perhaps, a misfortune to us, in our Established

Church, that centuries of peace should have released us from trials of every kind : we have, indeed, only our prosperity and its effects to contend with. And far more blessed is the task, to ‘strengthen the feeble knees,’ and support the innocent under suffering, than to rebuke the luxurious, in their indulgences, the profligate in their excesses. Scarcely ever that have I to do ; my flock live contentedly in the humble inheritance of their fathers ; and are secure by their simple habits and secluded situation, from any temptation to flagrant vice or enormity of crime. Little more is required of me than to keep them in the path of industry, in which providence has placed them, and in which they are so willing to remain that I have scarcely the pleasure of feeling myself accessory to their fulfilment of their duties.”—Here Mr. Neville did himself injustice, and was reminded that he did so, by a look of affectionate reproach from Catherine.—“ Sometimes my mind has aspired,” he continued, “ to

a more enlarged sphere of duty, more stirring exercises of the spirit; but, upon rigid scrutiny of my motives, I have generally found something of self-hood, something like worldly ambition at the bottom of them, and, at any rate, I have the grace to feel and know, that if there were any state in our spiritual vineyard, in which I could be of more use to my fellow-creatures than in that which I now hold, I should assuredly be called to it by my Heavenly Master, in his own good time, even at the eleventh hour."

In discourses such as these, in schemes of benevolence, and in enquiries into the natural history and statistics of the country, the winter passed calmly to Mr. Neville; and could he have seen the rose bloom again on his Catherine's cheek, he would have felt more assured, than he did, of amended health in himself.

Catherine, however, was certainly at times, and for longer periods together, less poignantly

unhappy than she had been at Nethercross. She was removed from those agonising alternations of hope and fear, love and indignation, resentment and pity, that had shaken her mind and desolated her heart, whilst exposed to impressions, that excited their perpetual recurrence. At first the languor that seemed to seize on all her faculties and affections, after the long overstrained excitement of them, was such, that she could only feel as if too suddenly had

—“The whirlwind in her breast
Died into a dreary calm.”

but her sweet and feminine nature could never remain long insensible to the pleasures or pains of those around her; and now, as shes at like an elder sister, among the youthful branches of the pastor's family, generally teaching them what she knew, sometimes learning some pretty art from them in return, even the remembrance of her own sorrows

were suspended, by her earnest desire to chase those of Mariette.—This poor girl admired Catherine as some superior being; every thing she did appeared, in her eyes, graceful, noble and endearing; the dejection, which she could not help sometimes betraying, was a still stronger bond of sympathy with her; she attributed it to Mr. Neville's state of health, and incessantly strove to cheer her with assurances that he looked better; she endeavored to guess her wishes, and was ever at her side with noiseless step, in the desire to anticipate them,—but on the subject of her own sorrows her lips were sealed, and it was only from the tears which rushed into her eyes, whenever her grandfather alluded to the evils caused in families, where the clashing of Catholic with Protestant principles existed, the persecution and cruelties to which Protestant wives and mothers, were in such instances subjected, that Catherine imagined her young

friend's griefs were in some measure connected with the state of religious feeling in the district.

Accident, however, produced that communication of her sorrows, which Mariette, though pining for sympathy, was too timid to offer ; and Catherine, though longing to console, far too delicate to seek.

CHAPTER V.

A LOVE STORY.

ONE morning, Catherine heard Mariette singing, in a low tone, an air of exceeding pathos and beauty ; she had never known her to sing before ; and after listening, till the notes died away in a melancholy cadence, she went into the parlour, and found her there at work, and alone.

“ Ah,” said she to her affectionately, “ this is the way you cheat us !—you are like the night-

ingale, you sing when you think there is no one to listen to you—but I heard you, and now to punish you for not singing to me before, you shall begin that pretty dove-like dirge again.”

Mariette’s pale cheek was suffused for a moment with a blush, which told how much the glow of health would have become it.

“O Miss Neville,” she said, “you are used to far other music than mine; I can sing nothing that could interest you.”

“Yes, indeed, my dear Mariette, any of your pretty native airs will please me; and I shall like to learn some of them from you—let me begin with this which I have just heard—it is so full of feeling—tell me the words.”

Mariette blushed more deeply.

“They are nothing,” said she, “at least, they express only the feelings of an insolated, unhappy being.”

The tears rushed into her eyes;—Catherine took her hand affectionately.

“My dear Mariette,” said she, “I fear I have awakened some sorrow by my importunity; if I have, pray forgive me.”

“Oh no,” Mariette exclaimed, with an energy of grief she had not before shewn, “my sorrows cannot wake, for alas! they never sleep,” and she wept, whilst Catherine at the sight of so much affliction in one so young, so gentle, so devoted, wept too—but Mariette dried her tears, when she saw Catherine’s flow in sympathy.

“Miss Neville,” said she, “do not let me distress you—I will tell you all my griefs; you will console me under them,—for condolence is consolation to a heart bruised as mine—but I will not begin my story now—I will sing you the little dirge, as you rightly called it, if it will amuse you—but do not criticise it, for both the air and the words are a melancholy fancy of my own, and no one has ever heard them but yourself.”

She began in a voice tremulous with emotion,

weep unseen, to die unpitied, has been the fate of thousands, gifted by nature, with every requisite for happiness—yes, Mariette, depend upon it, whatever your sorrows may be, you have plenty of companions in affliction, among your own sex—this world is truly called the school of suffering, and women begin to learn its lessons, as soon as ever they are capable of knowing why they weep.”

Mariette smiled mournfully, for it was sweet to her to find that she had a friend, who could understand her feelings.

“We will walk out this evening,” said she, “and see the sun-set, from your favorite point on the first plateau of the mountain—there is a seat in a recess near the chalet,” and here Mariette sighed, “we can sit there, and see the glorious valley all lit up with crimson and gold; and then I will tell you all I have suffered—all that presses upon my heart.”

“It will be a pleasure to me to walk with

you, my dear Mariette," said Catherine, "and to listen to you—at any rate I can sympathize in your griefs; and if I can advise with you, on them, or in any way lessen them by my condolence, I shall be happy to think that you have admitted me to your confidence."

So the two sisters in sorrow, parted;—Mariette to wipe away the traces of her tears, and prepare to meet her grandfather at dinner, with all the cheerfulness she could assume; and Catherine to write Mariette's stanzas, from recollection, to arrange them into English verse,—to sigh over the despairing sentiment they breathed, and to resolve to struggle against its infectious influence.

Towards sun-set, the young friends set out to walk according to their appointment—Lolotte, and her little brother, tripped by their sides, but soon, starting off in quest of their own pleasures, they left Mariette to begin the history of her trials;—

“My father, who was a minister of the blessed word,” said she, “was slain in defending his little church, against a band of French soldiers. My mother, thus left destitute, in a solitary spot, immediately after his death, was turned out of her house, in order that a Catholic priest might be put into it, though all the people in the parish were Protestants, except the priest himself, and his servant; she removed with her infant children to my grandfather’s. Her piety would have sustained her under the death of my dear father, but she had a heavy trial some months after, in the sudden disappearance of my eldest brother Pierre, not then nine years of age;—he had gone out early in the morning, according to his wont, with the goats;—the evening came, but he returned not—my mother became alarmed, and insisted on going herself to look for him;—my grandfather accompanied her—they knew the little favorite nook, the remains of a dilapidated chapel, where

he used to seek shelter from any sudden storm, and often loved to take his solitary meals; they hastened to it, and found his satchell, with the little store of provisions in it, destined for his dinner—the remains of his breakfast were on a square stone, which served him for a table, and beside it was his Bible turned down, as if he had been called away, whilst reading it—poor child!—it was at the history of Joseph sold by his brethren—this was all that could be traced of him—the goats were standing near as if waiting for him to conduct them back as usual; none of them were missing;—he therefore could not have gone astray, in search of any of them;—and as his dinner was untouched, it was evident that he must have left the chapel before the darkness of night could have exposed him to danger on that account. Still my poor mother was in a state of them ost cruel incertitude; and my grandfather had great difficulty in persuading her to return home—all night she

watched, and would not even have the door closed, lest my brother should come in the dark, and find it shut—but day-light came, and the sun rose and set,—and rose and set day after day, and we never heard any thing more of the unfortunate child. All the young men in the canton, the shepherds, and the chamois hunters, searched for him whenever they went out, but not the slightest trace could ever be discovered; and my mother was, at last, forced to console herself with the hope that he was in safety; as if he had fallen over a cliff, or been attacked by any rapacious animal, his remains, at any rate, would have been found. She was, therefore, compelled to admit the idea that he might have been taken away by some emissary of the Catholic priests, who were continually on the watch to kidnap the children of the protestants, in order that they might bring them up in their own faith. But the grief attendant upon this supposition added to the suspense in which the

feverish hope of his return constantly kept her, threw her into a deplorable state of nervous debility, which rendered every day of her succeeding existence burthensome to her; and a heavy affliction it was to my dear grandfather, to see all the active faculties and warm affections of his only surviving child thus clouded by the most distressing of all diseases."

Mariette's eyes swam in tears as she spoke, she kissed a little ring containing her mother's hair which hung by a black ribbon from her neck, and then proceeded.

"It was ten years last spring, after this event, that our little valley was thrown into alarm by the approach of a body of Sardinian troops, who were sent at the instigation of the Bishop of Pignerol, to levy fines upon our people, for having neglected to take off their hats to a great wooden image of Saint Donax, the bishop's patron saint. Our young men, indignant at the injustice, resisted the demand; the soldiers

threatened violence; and immediately all in the villages around, capable of bearing arms, rose in defence of their oft ravaged hearths. My grandfather accompanied his flock, to support by his prayers and consolations, the courage of those who fought—the resignation of those who might fall;—my brother Victor, though scarcely fifteen, headed a party of youths of his own age. It was a dreadful day for my mother!—I passed it on my knees beside her—we heard the volleys of shot, and at every discharge my mother shrieked, and uttered the most heart-rending exclamations;—suddenly we heard a rush of steps,—I flew to the door,—a young man bore Victor in his arms; the blood was streaming from him;—I turned sick, and could scarcely support myself.”

“Do not be alarmed said the young man,”
“your brother is not dangerously wounded—
lay him on some straw, I will return instantly.”
His voice re-assured me—I went to my mother,

dreading the effect of this immediately upon her;—but to my great consolation, I found her excited, rather than agitated, it was only the incessant conflicts between hope and fear, the wearing agonies of suspense, that had shaken the energies of her naturally strong mind, but now that she comprehended the nature, and saw the extent of her trial, all the mother was roused in her, and the heroism of her character returned. We laid Victor upon some straw, and my mother bound up his wound, which was a deep incision across the shoulder of the sword arm; he had fainted with the loss of blood, but came to himself as we removed him from the floor into bed;—whilst we were doing this, his deliverer returned, supporting another young man, in a far more deplorable situation—his head was laid open, his arm hung useless at his side, and his countenance presented the most ghastly expression.

“‘I have saved your brother!’ said the

young soldier, 'do what you can to restore mine;—I fly back to try to make peace between your people and ours—GOD grant no more blood may be shed.'

“ ‘Amen!’ responded my mother, ‘and now Mariette, let us see to this poor wounded youth, we must do for him even as we would for one of our own kindred.’

“ We accordingly began to cut away his hair from his temples, but the case was more serious than our simple surgery could meet—my mother trembled and was nearly fainting, and I was so terrified by seeing the pain which the least motion gave him from his broken arm, that I durst not render him any assistance, but began to weep in the dread that he might die before his kinsman should return;—happily we were not long kept in this state of alarm, we heard the drums beat the signal of retreat—we saw several peasants run by, and

shortly after, my grandfather came back with the tidings that the adverse party had retired, with considerable loss.

“ ‘ My poor Victor ! ’ said he, bending over him, ‘ it might have gone hardly with thee, had it not been for that generous enemy, who seemed determined to rescue thee even from his own party ; but who is this ? ’ he exclaimed, as he looked at the other unfortunate, who lay extended on the ground ; ‘ why it is the very one he separated thee from, who, with the fury of a lion’s whelp, would have cut the down, boy as he is, with his sabre, had not his companion staid his arm, as I called out to him to spare thee.’

“ My mother told my grandfather how it was that he was brought beneath our roof, entreating our hospitality for him.

“ ‘ Aye, and with the blessing of the Lord he shall have it to the utmost,’ said he, ‘ as

much as if he were my son:—but first let me examine into his condition.’

“ My grandfather, used to the treatment of fractures, and surgical cases, first probed and dressed his patient’s wound in the head, which he feared, he said, might be of a serious nature, and then proceeded to set his arm with splints; the youth was then put to bed, and a draught of milk-and-water given him, as we were afraid of any thing more stimulating; the remainder of the evening, all the night, and all the next day, my mother, my little sister and myself, were incessantly engaged in attendance on our invalids. Victor having only received a flesh wound, soon became convalescent, but the poor youth, his antagonist, remained unconscious of every thing about him, as if in a deep sleep, from which we had difficulty in rousing him enough to take the small quantity of liquids, which sufficed to keep the vital spark

alive. It was late in the evening of the third day after he had been brought to us, when we heard a gentle tap at the door—I opened it—and saw the young soldier, who came with an order from the Hospice of Pignerol, for the return of the youth who was, he told us, an élève of that society; his removal, however, in his present state, was not to be thought of; his comrade went up to the bed-side to look at him, he took the lamp in his hand to observe him more narrowly—he was shocked at the situation in which he found him, and ——— oh, Miss Neville, how beautiful did his own countenance look, as it became overshadowed with sadness, whilst he leaned over the poor insensible sufferer: I had not till then observed how handsome he was,—I saw, indeed, when he returned the second time, (for the first time, I saw nothing but Victor,) that he was tall and graceful, I saw, too, that his eyes were dark and his eyebrows like the hunter's bow, but it

was not till the moment that tears started into those eyes, bright as winter stars, and anxiety knit those finely-arched brows, and the animation of his countenance was changed into an expression of almost woman's tenderness, as he took the hand of the unconscious youth, and murmured over him—

“ ‘ My poor Bonaventure, was it to come to this, thou wouldst accompany me !’ that I felt I had never before seen a young man, at once so manly and so gentle,—I grieved to think that he should be a soldier, but sill more to think that he should be a Catholic and our enemy,—and, overcome with a feeling I had never known before, I hid my face in the curtain, and wept.

“ ‘ Mariette,’ said my mother, ‘ your spirits are worn out,—you have never left this bed-side since this poor youth was laid here, and to-night you shall take some repose.’

“ The young soldier turned round, and

looked at me as if I had been his sister—he took my hand :

“ ‘ Yes,’ said he, as affectionately and as simply as if he had indeed been my brother ; ‘ she looks pale and exhausted,—you shall all go to bed to-night. My name is Amédée Godin, I am Nephew to the Directeur of the Hospice ;—I am come in time to watch over my comrade, and when morning comes, I shall not fear but you will extend your hospitality, and make me welcome to a meal, if you see that I am willing to sit down to your family-board in christian fellowship.’

“ ‘ Heaven forbid,’ said my grandfather, ‘ that we should be so deficient in christian charity, as to do otherwise,—nay, truly, I rejoice that Providence should throw together those of different persuasions, in moments of peace ; for then, in the hour of war, if alas, we are doomed to be exposed to it, we may recollect, at any rate, we are fellow-creatures, and I

would be willing to say fellow-Christians, also ; but you shall not wait for morning to be assured of your welcome. Mariette, spread the table for our guest.'

" I gladly obeyed, and whilst I prepared some eggs, cheese and salad, the young man unstrapped his knapsack, in which he had brought some linen for his friend, and placing it with his gun behind the door, took his seat at the fire-side, and began to converse with my grandfather and my mother, with all the ease of one, who though young, had travelled much, and whose own frankness of character, made him feel himself at home, the moment he was invited to do so. From that hour he became as one of our own family, and his society diffused a cheerfulness over our little circle, beyond any that I had ever recollected to have enjoyed.—He shared in all our labors, and took the office of watching by his poor comrade entirely upon himself,—every morning he sallied

forth with his gun, accompanied by Victor, and never returned without some proof of his skill, as a marksman or a hunter;—in the evenings he would go with me to bring the goats home;—and when we all sat round the the fire, he would make me sing our Swiss ballads, or he would tell us some delightful story of other climes, which made Victor's heart beat to accompany him; but I thought he had travelled enough already, and—oh, Miss Neville—I could not help at times thinking, how happy I should have been if he had belonged to our village and our faith, that I might be sure of seeing him every day.

“ Meanwhile, however, the poor sufferer began gradually to recover consciousness, and though at first first we feared the long stupor, occasioned by his wound, might, in some degree, have affected his intellect, we yet hoped, from the short sentences he uttered, and the notice he seemed to take of surround-

ing objects, that a few more days would enable him to sit up, and finally to return to Pignerol, the place to which our new friend Amédée Godin waited to conduct him.

“ Alas ! my dear Miss Neville, little did we think, when we prayed night and morning for the recovery of this stranger, thrown so mysteriously upon our cares, that it was destined to fill our cup with bitterness, to wing the arrow of death to some, and render life itself burthensome to others.”

The poor girl wept for some minutes, and Catherine entreated her not to proceed.

“ Yes,” she said, “ I will finish my story, I shall feel relieved when you know it all, you are kind enough to sympathise in my griefs, without being acquainted with their cause, and I wish you to know how much need I have of all the consolation your friendship can bestow.

“ My mother was sitting one morning at

work by the bed-side of our invalid, and I was cutting out linen on a long table opposite; the clock was on the stroke of twelve,—at that hour it plays, as you have heard, the Bearnois hymn, on a set of little bells,—whilst the youth was very ill we had stopped these chimes, but now that he was well enough, to bear the sound, my brother Victor had set them again that morning, in order to surprise him with a melody that finds an answering chord in the breast of every inhabitant of the mountain districts. As soon as the clock struck, I turned towards the bed—the youth at the sound of the chimes gazed very attentively on the clock, and on the little figures that march round the gothic tower at the top of it. After the music ceased, he looked all round the room, and then turned towards my mother with a bewildered air, and gazed at her also;—at length he spoke,—‘The clock used to hang over the door,’ said he, ‘did it not?’ Delighted to hear

him ask a rational question, I did not at the moment consider how singular a one it was—but it immediately struck my mother, who replied, ‘yes, it hung over the door a long time since;—but how came you to know its position had been changed?’ she looked earnestly at him, as she spoke; he sate up, and drawing the curtains back, surveyed all the room with an enquiring eye, and then said ‘because I remember there was a bust of William Tell, between the windows, where the clock is now.’ ‘You remember?’ repeated my mother, in trembling accents, and turning as pale as ashes, ‘What then have you been here before?’ ‘I dont know,’ said the poor youth, sinking back on his pillow, exhausted by the effort he had made, ‘I cannot recollect—but I think I have—I think I remember getting hid in a large Armoire, but I do not see it now,—perhaps it is a dream.’ ‘No, no, my child,’ murmured my mother, ‘it is no ——’ before she could finish

her sentence, she had fainted on the bed, with her arm thrown across my brother Pierre; for he it was, Miss Neville, who had been thus thrown, by the hand of providence, upon our care, and who, now that he began to recover his recollection, gradually recognised the objects with which he had been familiar in his childhood. It was a happy evening for us all! my dear grandfather returned thanks to the Almighty for the restoration of our long-lamented Pierre; my mother wept incessantly, but her tears were those of joy, and her newly restored child kissed them off her hands as fast as they fell; Amédée alone appeared not to share in the general rejoicing. My brother Pierre had told us, in very few words, that whilst tending his goats on the mountains, he was accosted by some strangers, who proved to be emissaries of the Monks of the Hospice de Pignerol; between persuasions and threats he was induced to accompany them. The brotherhood had educated

him, he said, in the holy tenets of the Infallible Church, and had treated him, all the years he had been under their pious care, with even parental tenderness.

“ We all sighed at hearing him speak thus, but my grandfather would not allow us to make either enquiry or remark that might interfere with our own joy, or cause him any agitation in his weak state. ‘ Our son that was lost is found,’ said he, ‘ and all that we have to do at present, is to be thankful and rejoice.—Amédée went out, and returned in a few minutes laden with what little dainties he could procure in the village, and my mother brought out all her best stores, and we made a little feast;—still, amid our rejoicing, there was a misgiving on our minds, that his long absence from us, and the tenets in which he had been educated, might operate in Pierre’s mind to produce something like estrangement from his natural ties; and so too surely it proved. As he recovered his

strength, he became more and more thoughtful, and it was evident his heart was with his instructors in the Hospice. When he could go about, he never staid in the room during our devotions, but would cross himself, and retire to the garden, where he had erected a wooden crucifix, before which he would kneel for hours together, and sometimes we could hear him repeat prayers to different saints, to preserve him from the evil influence of associating with heretics, as he, in the presumption of his youth and bigotry of his profession, dared to call my pious grandfather, and my meek and humble-minded mother, as well as his brothers and sisters.—Amédée saw the cloud that all this threw over us, and shared in the gloom, though, alas, he could not sympathize in its cause,—he came to meet me, one evening, when I had been on an errand into the village to a sick parishioner, ‘Marianne,’ he said, in a voice so deep, and yet so tender, that no one who listened to him would

have thought it was the voice of a soldier,—‘I have something to say to you alone,’—my heart throbbed; I had a strange flutter of anticipating dread, mixed with something, I knew not what—it was a sort of hope—yet there was nothing to hope. ‘Yes, Mariette,’ he continued, ‘I fear to afflict your mother, by informing her, yet she must know it.’ I felt firm in a moment, and entreated him to tell me whatever he might have to communicate. ‘You will hate me Mariette,’ he said, still in the same tender, and indeed desponding tone—‘because you will think me accessory to it; but Pierre wishes to depart; to return home—that is,’ checking himself, ‘to the Hospice de Pignerol.’ “Surely not!” said I—“he cannot be so unnatural, so ungrateful!—it will break my poor mother’s heart.” I began to weep. ‘O Mariette,’ said Amédée, ‘do not afflict me by the sight of your tears—I am already too unhappy, in having to leave you.’ Alas, I had not

thought of that, and I wept the more, for it seemed to me that I was about to lose two brothers at once.—‘I had hoped, Mariette,’ said Amédée, and he put his arm so affectionately round me, for I trembled like an aspen, ‘that your mother would have been spared this trial,—and that Piere would have left you without any circumstance occurring, that should reveal his relationship.’ “Ah then,” said I, “you knew it, why did you not tell me at least.” ‘Because I feared to afflict you with the idea of his return—which I knew could not be avoided; for from my uncle, the Directeur of the school in the Hospice, I learned, long since, that the monks keep particular watch upon Pierre, because they think he has a vocation to a religious life. Yes, my dear Mariette,’ he continued, ‘I see this idea shocks you, who have, I grieve to think, been brought up out of the pale of the Holy Mother Church; but I do not love you less for that, because it is what you cannot be said to have

chosen, and indeed could not help—and I am no bigot though I would die, sword in hand, or at the stake, for my religion, as whole armies of blessed martyrs have done before me.”

“We have our martyrs too,” I said, sighing deeply.—‘Yes,’ said he, error will have its victims, as well as truth; but creeds need not separate hearts; nay, cannot do it, can they Mariette?—may not hearts be bound together by sacred ties, which no human authorities can unloose?” “Ah, Miss Neville—you will easily think what impression an avowal of love, from one so gifted, so eloquent, must have made on a girl like me, brought up in the strictest and most monotonous retirement, already venerating him as the preserver of both my brothers, and owing to him all the delightful feelings and ideas, that seemed to have shed a purple light over my little narrow hemisphere!—But you weep, my dear Miss Neville, you feel for me—but do not distress yourself thus—yet it is a

sweet consolation to me, that I can pour my griefs into your bosom—only a few days ago, I should have thought it impossible that I could have confided them so entirely to a stranger—but you are not a stranger—no, we are walking in the same road to eternal life. ‘And have the same obstacles to struggle with,’ thought Catherine. “We have the same blessed hopes—and we have both our sorrows, though of a different kind; but I will go on—my story will soon be at an end.—Amédée explained to my mother, and grandfather, that he was aware of Pierre’s connections being in this village; his uncle having informed him of the circumstances attendant on his being brought away from his native mountains; for the Catholics, so far from thinking it any crime to decoy, or steal a Protestant child, and thus plunge his parents and kindred into misery; glory in it as the meritorious rescuing of a heretic from perdition; and

it was to prevent the unnatural bloodshed of brother against brother, that Amédée had rushed in to separate Victor and Pierre, for he knew my grandfather was the minister of the place, and heard him call out ‘ My son, my son, spare my son,’ when the sabre was raised over Victor’s head.—When Pierre was afterwards wounded so severely by a young hunter, armed only with a *couteau de chasse*, Amédée brought him to his paternal roof; feeling an amiable gratification, consonant with his good disposition, in the idea of placing him, unconsciously to himself and them, in the care of his kindred: but when he returned to the Hospice, the Superior was displeased with what he had done, fearing it might lead to some discovery which might unsettle Pierre’s mind. Any thing his mother or family might feel, I believe, made no part of the consideration, and Amédée was sent back to us, with orders to remain, until

Pierre, or as they chose to re-christen him, Bonaventure, should be sufficiently recovered, to return with him."

"We owed too much to Amédée, to include him in our resentment against the cruel machinations of the brotherhood of the Hospice, for in them he had had no share; he had indeed been like an elder brother to Pierre, who entertained for him a degree of affection as well as of reverence; of which poor Victor, who had often wished for a companion of his own age, felt jealous. Indeed, from the time of our relationship being discovered, every day brought some wound to our feelings, it was evident that though Amédée might be no bigot, Pierre was a most decided one—he seemed to tremble, as if he committed a sin, in returning any of our caresses—he could scarcely bear to sit down at table with us, because we did not cross ourselves, before we ate, and whenever the Bible was opened, he turned away his eyes, as if he feared

they should be guilty of profanation, in looking on the blessed records of eternal life, which Infinite Mercy has laid open to the whole human race. His good sense and humility made him keep the difference of his opinions to himself, for he would not be guilty of the presumption in appearing to dictate to my grandfather's white hairs, but he told him firmly, that it was his intention, immediately on his return to the Hospice to commence his noviciate, and to devote himself entirely to the monastic life. What a grief this declaration was to us all can scarcely be imagined, my dear Miss Neville, by any one who has not been, like ourselves, kept apart for centuries from the world—our faith, our most perfect bond of unity, our hopes, one common stock of consolation—we could not but feel that Pierre was the eldest darling hope of a father, who had sacrificed his life in the defence of primitive Christianity, and the lineal descendant of a long line of ancestors, who had,

for centuries, endured every species of persecution, faithful to their tenets, and glorious examples of their truth—and now, alas! when he might have been the comfort of us all, to see his best affections and principles thus warped by superstition! his natural love to his mother and kindred, swallowed up in the fervor of his gratitude towards the tutors of his infancy, overlooking entirely the atrocious means by which they had possessed themselves of the power of directing his education, and influencing his mind—his beautiful devotional feelings, and early abandonment of the world, all warped and twisted, and offered up amiss. This was a grievous trial to my grandfather, and whilst my mother, with the tenderness of her nature, wept the estrangement of her child, her first-born, my grandfather deplored in it the loss of a ‘burning and a shining light,’ which might, in time, have guided his own congregation on their way through this weary wilderness of a world.—

The day of separation, however, came, Pierre wept, as he turned away; but he asked no blessing, even of his reverend grandfather, who, however, gave it him, most devoutly; and also to Amédée, who knelt a moment at his feet, to thank him for his hospitality; and then embraced my mother, and all of us—me the last; but he drew me closer to him, to whisper that he would return in a few days, to bring us tidings of my brother.—O Miss Neville, it was this assurance that gave me strength to bear his departure; for alas! from the moment I had begun to anticipate it, I found that all my happiness was in his presence. How dreary was every thing after he went away; but I concealed all my regrets, intent only on cheering my poor mother, who sunk into an alarming state of despondency, as soon as Pierre left her.”

“ In less than a week, Amédée returned; his countenance glowed with hope—it seemed to shed a sun-light over our silent cottage—he

cheered my mother with an affectionate letter from Pierre; for it seemed as if the poor youth, finding himself once more secure within the pale of his monkish seclusion, felt a little more at liberty to express some, at least, of the dictates of nature; and the monks, who had in this instance, their own policy for appearing liberal, and indulgent, had laid no restraint on his manner of communicating them; and my mother both wept and smiled, as she perused his assurances, that he supplicated the Virgin for her conversion every morning and every evening, at Matins and Vespers—and had already repeated fifteen-hundred Ave Marias since he had left her, in furtherance of the cause.

“As soon as Amédée could find himself alone with me, he poured forth all the feelings of his glowing heart; he told me he had obtained a promise from his uncle to procure him a dispensation for our marriage; for you may

not be aware, Miss Neville, that there are heavy penalties, on any priest, who should venture to solemnize a marriage between a Catholic and a Protestant; he assured me he never would interfere with my religious tenets, or obtrude his own upon me, but leave it to time and Heaven to bring me within the pale of his Church.—He painted the felicity attendant on the union of two faithful hearts, in such beautiful colors, that I wept with tenderness and joy whilst I listened to him, and yet, all the while I listened, I felt that this felicity was not destined for me. Nevertheless I could not bear to damp his hopes : perhaps my own were entwined with them unconsciously to myself. I suffered him to speak to my mother on the subject, but alas ! she put a decided negative immediately on his proposals, she had suffered too much from the abduction of her first-born, and his consequent estrangement from her, to bear the thought, for a moment, of another

of her children being in any way allied with his betrayers; she acknowledged all the virtues of Amédée, but she weighed against them the difference of his religious sentiments, the misery of having the offspring of our marriage brought up in tenets so opposite to all in which I had been educated—the obstacles those tenets must perpetually throw in the way, even of our own domestic happiness; I had not thought enough of these things, but now I saw that to act counter to her wishes, would be to fill up her cup of sorrow with its last and bitterest drop, and I conjured Amédée to withdraw his suit, at any rate, until her health might be in a state better able to bear a discussion, which, feeble as she then was, shook her almost to dissolution. He loved me too truly not to comply with my wish,—he went away, but only on condition that I would permit him to return at the expiration of a month, to make one more effort to gain my mother's consent to our union.

Alas! before that month expired, my dear mother was laid in the silent grave! years of suspense had worn out her powers both physical and mental, and she never recovered the shock she sustained in the sudden discovery, that she was nursing her own dear child; and his subsequent voluntary desertion of her; for in no other light could she ever be taught to consider his return to the Hospice; though, poor youth! even had he wished to remain with us, the tyrannical laws against our devoted people would not have allowed it. After my mother's death, I strove to forget every thing, but how to supply her place to my grandfather and my brothers and sisters; for oh, Miss Neville, the loss of a mother is always severely felt, even though her health may incapacitate her from taking any active part in the care of her family, still she is a sweet rallying point, around which affection and obedience, and a thousand tender endeavors to please, concen-

trate; and dreary is the blank when such a point is withdrawn,—it is like that lovely star before us, neither its heat nor light are any thing to us in themselves, yet the shepherd would feel his heart sad if he missed it, when he lifts his eye to the brow of the mountain, over which it rises when the sun descends.

“ Amid all my grief for my mother’s loss, and the additional cares which I took upon myself in consequence of it, I yet could not help counting the days that were to elapse before I should see Amédée again, and I found afterwards, that it was his image which consoled me so amidst my trials.—At length he came, on the very day he had mentioned,—he started when he saw us in mourning—he instantly felt our loss—he wept it with us—he seemed to my grandfather like another son; O, if it had pleased Heaven that he could have been so in reality.—But so far from conceiving any obstacle to our union to be done away

by the departure of my dear mother, it seemed to me as if all the objections she had made to it whilst living, came before me with additional force, now that she was dead: there appeared something treacherous, cruel and unfilial in disobeying her wishes, because she was no longer present to set them forth, and I experienced in anticipation all the sad effects which the great and decided difference in our religious belief might produce between Amédée and me in marriage, because, even already, I felt myself constrained to keep silence with him, from delicacy, on the objects nearest to my heart, for I well knew that, though no bigot, naturally, he, as well as Pierre, was to a certain degree, unavoidably enthralled by the bonds his priests wove round him, and that for every word of liberality and kindness he uttered to me, he had to make confession and penance to them.—Still it was so hard to give him up! every day and every hour increased my love

for him so immeasurably, that I felt as if I could not, of myself, support so terrible a struggle between my duty and my wishes:—I resolved to tell my grandfather every thing, and to entreat that if he could not conscientiously authorise my affection for Amédée, he would aid me by his prayers, to surmount it.—He listened to me with the kindness you must have seen is a part of his nature, and I was encouraged by it to pour out all my feelings into the bosom of him who was now my sole parent and guide.

“ ‘ Ah, my poor child,’ said he, when I finished my appeal, ‘ thou hast an early and a bitter trial, but He who visits thee with it can support thee through it—if it had been poverty, my child, or any other mere worldly obstacle, that interposed between the union of two faithful and uncorrupted hearts, like thine and his, I would bid thee hope, and I would trust that time and patience would

work through all difficulties, to bring thee forth, at last, rejoicing; but this is not a matter of worldly property, or worldly happiness. Marriage, my dear child, in the eyes of a devout Christian, is an eternal compact, it is the most holy of all states, the only perfect one, and according to the degree in which it is estimated, the spirit with which it is entered upon, may the state of religion in the minds of the parties be surely ascertained, and its effect on their religious state prognosticated.—Think what it is, my dear child, for two beings so to link their fates, as to desire to have but one soul between them,—think what a glorious, a transcendant blessing it must be to have that desire fulfilled, as it undoubtedly will be, in time, to all who approach the altar of the Lord, in a right spirit, to employ His blessing upon their union; to thus become the image of himself, the union of his wisdom and love, shadowed forth in his favored creatures,

as in the union between Christ and his Church, adorned as a bride for her husband; by which we may understand also, the natural delights and endearing ties, which are all sanctified to us by the approbation and blessing of our heavenly Father, when acknowledged with thankfulness, as coming from his parental hand,—but then, what a continual growing in grace ought such a state to be! How ought all its trials, for the happiest state must have its trials, to be made to tend to its purification! How ought you to give up to each other, to seek counsel of each other, to support each other, to heighten each other's faith, to rejoice with the same hopes: ah, my child, think seriously of this—those who have no religious feelings in common, however sincere each party may be separately, can never be married in spirit, their union can never rise beyond that of the body only, their affections can never sublime beyond natural things,—in all

the most solemn interests of immortal beings, they can never be of any use to each other;— and after the endearments of youth are passed, old age comes on, without any increase of confidence, and at last they go down solitary, and by different paths to the grave.—’ ”

Mariette made a long pause, but after a while she exerted herself, and continued.

“ After this conversation, my grandfather told me that he should leave my decision entirely to myself; adding, that it was a matter of conscience as much as of affection, and if I sought for counsel in prayer I should not be left without guidance; and so too surely I felt it to be, and too well did I feel which way my conscience ought to guide me: how, indeed, could I think of forsaking the simple and primitive worship of my forefathers, preserved for centuries, a peculiar people consecrated to God, and blessed continually by his holy spirit, supporting them under every description of

penury, privation and sorrow, and even enabling them to meet martyrdom and death, not only with resignation, but with triumph; how could I forsake the prayers of my childhood, the venerable offices of my dear grandfather, for a creed of superstition, cruelty, and imposture, belying the pure spirit of Christianity, and which had acted upon our people like a scourge and a curse, from one generation to another; how could I leave my dear kindred for a stranger brought up in this creed, with all his friends and relatives nurtured in it, and believing every principle what to him appeared honor and religion, concerned in the propagation of it.—O no! he was himself, by nature, noble-minded, liberal and tolerant, but his early impressions were stronger than himself; and though his love for me inclined him to look upon my heresies, as he did not scruple to call my freedom from his errors, with pity, rather than displeasure, yet, I was aware they would

always have been sources of affliction to him ; and I, how could I have looked up to him, through such a cloud of superstition, as my head, as my dear grandfather solemnly entreated me to remember, the woman is told to do in marriage, even as the Church looks up to Christ;—but alas, his Church looks up to Antichrist, and an evil sign, and most opposite correspondence would that thought have constantly inspired between us—No, no;—I saw what was my duty, and I resolved to follow it, even unto death.—The word of the Lord says, ‘ give me thy heart,’ and too surely I have felt that it was indeed my bleeding heart I offered up in obedience to the command—and indeed, I seem now to go about without one—such a void, such a sinking I feel here,” and the poor girl pressed her thin, transparent hands upon her breast—“ but I distress you, my dear Miss Neville,” she continued, seeing Catherine’s eyes swimming in tears, “ I ought not to talk so long

of my own griefs, to you, who are so anxious yourself about your venerable father, but I have not any thing more to say—I took my final leave of Amédée, here, on this spot—I felt his tears drop upon my hands, I saw his last look of agony and reproach; I heard him call me cruel, unfeeling, the destroyer of his happiness—and ever since that moment, I have longed to die—it is very wrong in me, very sinful; I feel it is not resignation—but I am endeavouring to teach my sister Lolotte, to manage the house and dairy, and to do every thing that can be useful to my grandfather; and I hope, he and my brothers and sisters will soon be reconciled to my departure, if it should please my heavenly father to call his murmuring child early to everlasting rest.”

Mariette paused, and Catherine affectionately drew her towards her.

“You have done your duty, Mariette,” said she, “you have made the greatest of all sacri-

fices for conscience sake, and it may please the Almighty to console you for it, even here.”

Mariette made no answer, but by a mournful shake of the head; and as they proceeded homewards in silence, Catherine could not but think, as she looked on the fading cheek and attenuated form of her young companion, that she was indeed not likely to remain long on earth, struggling between the fond feelings of her heart, and the stern dictates which duty laid down in her mind, enlightened as it had been, from her tenderest years, with the pure and unsophisticated rays of heavenly truth.

But how many painful feelings,—what lively self-reproach, did this young creature’s simple statement excite in Catherine’s breast, as she wandered on the brow of the mountain, and pondered over the similarities, and the differences of Mariette’s griefs and her own.

“Yes,” she exclaimed, “her’s is truly the rendering up the idol of her worship to Him,

who has said, 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me.'—And in what a fine spirit of humility and obedience she does it!—the object of her love is faultless in her eyes;—he loves her with passion still more ardent than her own;—every idea that either of them can form of happiness, is connected with each other; every tender feeling bound up with each other; their hearts, their unsophisticated hearts are entwined together; yet, at the voice of duty and religion, this gentle girl gains courage, to unloose the knot that binds them, to separate them; and even then accuses herself, because she weeps in doing so! What an example she sets me;—alas! how differently have I conducted myself under the same trial!—incessantly cherishing an image, of which even my own partial eyes see all the sad disfiguring imperfections; grieving my dear father's heart, with my sorrows; daring to murmur even against the merciful decrees of Providence. Oh, let me be thankful to heaven,

for the example of this child of nature and truth ;
—let me endeavour from this day to follow it ;
and to be grateful if, blessed as I am, with a
firmer frame, I may be enabled to make my
sacrifice, without that injury to my bodily health,
which might leave my dear father destitute, as
I fear her poor grandfather will soon be, of the
prop and solace of his old age—for so his par-
tial love is accustomed to consider his Ca-
therine, selfish and repining, alas ! as she has
lately proved herself—but I will be so no longer ;
—no—for the sake of others, I will exert my-
self—I will support this poor drooping girl, and
cheer this house of mourning ;—and I shall by
so doing, gladden the heart of my father, and
bring back that peace to my own bosom, which
can only exist, with the consciousness of duty.

CHAPTER VI.

AMENDMENT.

FROM the day that Catherine took the good resolution of sacrificing her own regrets to the happiness of those around her ; she did indeed begin to experience, that in all endeavours to conquer feelings, which cannot be indulged without injurious consequences,

“ Whilst the busy means are plied
They bring their own reward,”

Knowing that on the health of the body, much

of the health of the mind also depends, her first care was to recover her own, by resuming the habits which had always preserved and strengthened it, until they had been interrupted from the excess of a sensibility, which, at last, became, in her, equally cause and effect; the depression of her spirits communicating itself to her frame, and the languour of her frame unavoidably affecting her spirits. Her sleepless nights she resolved to overcome by more active days; for she was aware that the most wakeful, tear-worn eyes must eventually close in natural rest, under the influence of a certain degree of fatigue, and exposure to the open air.

The spring was now rapidly advancing, and every day developed more and more the infinite variety of beauty, which these Alpine solitudes afforded.

Catherine wandered incessantly among the sublime scenery that surrounded her, and familiarised herself with nature in her wildest garb,

among mountains, whose summits seemed to reach the skies;—forests of aged trees, that appeared covered with the globe itself;—torrents that rushed headlong over rocks, whose grim precipices seemed to rejoice in the whitening foam, and deafening roar;—the shifting magic of lights and shadows, more beautiful, more transporting than any thing that imagination could conceive, every thing speaking the greatness of the Creator's hand. Catherine continually felt her heart swell with devout admiration, her spirit lifted up with holy gratitude, to “Him who sitteth in the heavens over all from the beginning.” And when amid these, his own inspiring works, she found herself reflecting,—“Lord what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him.” Amid these scenes of primeval greatness, linked, in their origin, with eternal duration, how trifling appeared the ephemeral events of the short span of human life!—amidst this deep silence

of nature, how could the murmurs of human passion venture to make themselves heard! No!—as Catherine's soul mounted on the seraph wings of contemplation towards heaven, it gradually lost sight of the baser things of earth, which appeared but as specks in the vale of suffering and folly over which she soared.

Hamilton's characteristics were not of a kind to be assimilated with the sublime, either in material creation, or in abstract reflection; and gradually his image ceased to associate itself in Catherine's heart, with the surrounding objects; gradually she began to be conscious that, occupied with higher thoughts, moments and hours had passed without his being recalled to her memory: but satisfied with this conviction, half consolatory, half painful, she took care to run no risk of renewing her tenderness by any analysis of her feelings on being sensible of what she scarcely could bear to acknowledge to herself was a diminution of it. As the affrighted

traveller, when he passes the couchant lion, stops not to ascertain whether it sleeps, so Catherine, content to know that every step she made, in the path of self-controul, took her further from the dangers of the road, resolved not to look back upon any part of it, but steadfastly to keep her eye fixed upon the recovered peace which she hoped might await the end of her journey. Her resolution, however, was a little shaken by a letter from Louisa Longcroft, who, although she had laid it down as a rule to herself, after the explanation they had had on the subject, never to mention Hamilton's name to Catherine, either in conversation or in writing, thinking with Madame de Stael that "*les maladies de l'imagination s'augmentent, en les communiquant,*" now mentioned the name of one so nearly connected with it as to require fully as much resolution in Catherine to peruse the passage in which it was introduced.

After detailing all the little particulars con-

nected with Nethercross, and with herself, which she thought would interest Mr. Neville and Catherine; Louisa thus proceeded—

“Mr. Dacres has just called with the intelligence, that Sir William Forsyth is dead—a long eulogium on his virtues, follows the announcement of this event in all the papers; and in some of them a covert censure of her ladyship; which, if she have any feeling left, must, at such a moment, bring her to some serious reflection—but I fear that to expect this, is more charitable than reasonable. Mr. Dacres says that Sir William’s death is attributed, among his friends, entirely to his domestic chagrins; the idea of exposing his wife to public censure was insupportably painful to his feelings; the continuing to live with her, after the disgrace her conduct had brought upon her, was incompatible with his honor—the gout stepped in, and decided the conflict—her ladyship, if report does not belie her, will console herself as soon

as the period of her first mourning is expired by changing her name for one to which additional rank and influence may not be wanting as inducements.

Catherine was thankful that this allusion did not agitate her as it would have done a few months before; her predominate feeling was for Hamilton; but it was one of that disinterested regard of which only woman's heart is capable. She was thankful for any thing that spared him the disgrace of being held up, not, certainly, as the seducer of innocence, for of that his worst enemies could not accuse him, in the case in point, but as the betrayer of social confidence, which is one of the greatest injuries that can be committed against the spirit of society.

“ His crime, as it regards heaven,” said she, “ remains the same, its degree can only be known to that heaven and himself—let us hope that his repentance may be proved by his future conduct; and that the partner in his guilt may

become the partner in his reformation also;" but this was a harrowing subject to dwell upon; and it was fortunate for her, that her reflections were interrupted, by the the gentle tap of Mariette, at the door.

Those who have ever led a very retired life, must often have remarked, that it is not only misfortunes, which, according to the old adage, never come single, but also, that any other event of comparative importance, whatever may be its complexion, has generally a companion at its heel. The receipt of a letter for any of its individuals, was an incident in itself, in the little circle at St. Etienne; but a still more remarkable one occurred directly after, in the visit of a stranger.

"A handsome young man," said Mariette, faintly smiling, "with eyes like Amédée's, and a voice that invites to confidence—he comes from Italy, and has a friend with him—they are at the Inn, and the young man called to

ask if divine worship would be celebrated tomorrow, as it was both his friend's wish and his own, to attend. I believe they are going to stay some time, and I am glad of it, for it will be a little society for you and your father."

"We want none, my dear Mariette, beyond what we have," said Catherine, "but I shall be very glad if this stranger find favor in your eyes, from his own being like Amédée's; I think it has had a little effect already."

"No, Miss Neville," said Mariette, with sweet, yet solemn earnestness, "you know me better than to think so—it is my greatest consolation to think, that I shall take Amédée's image with me, in all its freshness, into the next world."

"Yes," said Catherine, "you may indeed be consoled by that thought; for, however unfortunate your love may have been, no censure attaches to the object of it, and you may well

seek consolation in sympathy, because you can ask it without a feeling of degradation.”

This was the difference between Mariette's situation and her own, which it was always painful to Catherine to be reminded of,—whilst Mariette, with all the ingenuousness of a child of nature, could pour her sorrows into Catherine's bosom, and dwell for hours on the graces, the virtues of Amédée.—Catherine was obliged to bury her secret in her heart, for she felt as if she should have sullied the spotless purity of Mariette's mind, by imparting in return, any of her own griefs, with which the defalcation of him with whom they all originated, and the vices of society were unfortunately so mixed up, that she could not complain of her unhappiness, without blushing for its cause. Catherine knew, from sad experience, that when those thoughts began to gain dominion over her, the most dangerous society:

she could have, was her own, and seeing her father pass the window, she seized her straw hat, ran after him, and entwining her arm in his, insisted upon his strolling with her on the borders of the lake.—It was near the hour of sunset, the lake reflected all the bright clouds above, with the deeper shades of the chesnut-trees, with which it was fringed,—the tinkling of the bells round the necks of the cows, who were returning homewards, alone broke the stillness all around, and every thing breathed of beauty and peace.—Whilst they gazed on the tranquil scene, they heard the sweet notes of the flute from some unseen point of the rock,—but presently the performer appeared, though at some distance, accompanied by a young man, who carried a portfolio under his arm.

“English travellers, no doubt,” said Mr. Neville.

“Yes,” said Catherine, “that one is En-

glish I am sure,—it is that beautiful air of Arne's:

‘ What Bard, O Time, discover,
With wings first made thee move?’ ”

“ Yes, my dear, the words are Sheridan's:

‘ Ah, sure it was some lover,
That never left his love ;
For ah, too well he'd know
The pangs that absence brings,
Though but one day he were away,
To picture thee with wings.’

Yes, sure enough it is the air,—your dear mother thought the words in Sheridan's happiest taste:—I quoted them once in a letter to her, in one of our long separations, and she loved them ever afterwards.”

“ And I love them too,” said Catherine, “ far more for that than for their own elegance, elegant as they are—and the air too—how nice and English it sounds on this even-

ing breeze. I dare say they are the two strangers that Mariette told me of, just before I came out."

"Well then, my dear," said Mr. Neville, "we will walk up to them and give them a welcome."

"Without being introduced?" said Catherine with a smile.

"Why yes; as I am not at either of the universities, just now, I may venture on the solecism; though I have heard of a gentleman-commoner, who made the standing etiquette an excuse for not pulling a fellow of the same college (to say nothing of his being a fellow of the same species) out of the water, when he fell into it up to his neck."

The Rector was led on insensibly into a dissertation on the duties of benevolence, on the gregarious nature of man, and the force of opposing sullenness, or pride, or shyness, or whatsoever else it may be called, that must be

brought into action by an Englishman, ere he can resist, as he generally does, this inherent principle of his moral constitution, by almost invariably estranging himself from his countrymen, in the very situations in which benevolence would prompt him to claim national affinity with them.

“ Now here are the strangers,” said he, as they drew nearer and nearer to the party, who quickened their steps towards them into a pace which showed no inclination to avoid any proffered courtesy. “ These strangers may, for ought we know,—— But my dear, why do you press forward?—what is it you look at so eagerly?”

“ Strangers!” repeated Catherine, “ why it is—it must be—yes, surely it is Edward Longcroft and Lord Hervey!”

Scarcely had she uttered their names, ere they also joyfully exclaimed—

“ Catherine! Miss Neville! Mr. Neville!”

“ Oh, what a pleasure ! ” — “ What an unexpected delight ! ” — “ Why, how came you here ? ” — and “ What stay are you going to make ? ” — and “ What a gratification to meet dear friends at such a distance ! ” — and “ How we shall enjoy these beautiful scenes all together ! ” — “ When did you come ? ” — “ Where have you been ? ” — “ How long shall you stay ? ” — “ Where are you at ? ” — Such were the questions, for answers nobody waited for or listened to, that formed the conversation of the first five minutes, of the happy party.

Ah, is there any happiness like that of the affections ! from the soul-absorbing influence of individual love, through all the endearing gradations of natural ties, and selected friends, down to the generalised claims of our fellow-creatures : it will ever be found that all our real enjoyments are solid only as the feelings of the heart are connected with them ; and long after the traces of external objects may be

effaced from the memory, the kindly sentiments and participated feelings, with which they may have been connected, remain indelible in the interior recesses of the breast, which they fill with a sweet indistinctness of recollected enjoyment.

Ah, what remains to the feeling heart, as the illusions of youth disappear, the pageants of ambition fade away, the hopes of worldly happiness vanish in "thin air," and the dear forms beloved, with whom they were associated, drop one by one into the grave: ah, what indeed then remains, but the remembrance of moments of reciprocated kindness and social intercourse; material things leave scarcely a trace on the memory of age, but the affections of its youth may truly be said to—

"blossom in the dust,"

for even on the edge of the tomb they flourish, and cheer us with hopes of their renewal, in

the realms beyond, where all the fine sympathies of our nature, here, too often, our grief and trial, will be restored to their original destination, endless sources of purification and felicity.

Mr. Neville was the first to recover his equanimity, and to release the hands of his young friends.

“It is indeed,” said he, “a most fortunate rencontre. ‘*Quam sæpe,*’ as Terence says, ‘*fate temere eveniunt, quæ non audeas optare.*’ And how many chances against it, my love! it would puzzle the greatest mathematician, I fancy, that ever lived, to calculate the *chances* and *changes* that might elapse before such another coincidence of circumstances took place, as has brought us altogether at this moment.”

This matter-of-fact remark, brought all the party to their senses, and gave a sort of—

“sober certainty of waking bliss;”

to Edward Longcroft, who had, at first, seemed to fear that he was in some raptured dream—but it was indeed real—that he walked by Catherine's side—that he had pressed her hand—almost in the first moment of surprise pressed her cheek—that that cheek still glowed with pleasure at seeing him!—and then, as he gazed upon her, with the admiring eye of a lover, to whom every thing is a charm,

“ And each new charm is lovelier than the last,”

he thought how infinitely more beautiful she looked in the pretty peasant-dress of the country, than she had done in her gayest ball attire, in London; and then he rejoiced to think, there were no balls, no fashionables among the mountains.

“ We can dance on the green sward together,” thought he, “ to the music of the tabor and castanets; and she will look like Erminia among the shepherds,—ah well;

“ Methinks a shepherd's is a happy life.”

and so he lost himself in sweet reveries, with short discourse between, for Lord Hervey and Catherine, and Mr. Neville, all talked more than he did ;—at length they reached the Pastor's hospitable door, and in half an hour, Edward and Lord Hervey, seemed as thoroughly at home, in the little circle, as if they had never been beyond the valley :—but they respected the venerable Arnaud too much, both in his office and his person, to disturb the simple habits of his family ; and therefore, they early retired to their quarters, at the “Eagle's Nest,” as the little Inn was called, by somewhat of a misnomer ; the house being in the lowest and most sheltered spot in the whole valley, and the widowed hostess, having all the attributes of the dame, without any admixture of the eagle in her composition.

CHAPTER VII.

A SABBATH IN THE MOUNTAINS.

THE next morning Catherine awoke with feelings of pleasure to which she had been long a stranger—her heart, by nature so warm, sprung towards the objects of her home affections; and when she went down stairs, and saw Edward Longcroft, waiting to greet her, with his pensive smile, she held out her hand to him with an affectionate eagerness,

that made the blood mount into his pale cheek, yet he felt, that in the greeting, all the ease of friendship was on her side,—all the anxiety of love on his own; he could almost have wished her manner less affectionate, less easy; but who could look upon her, and wish it otherwise than what it was!

Lord Hervey had had a restless night, and Catherine was shocked to see, now that the hectic flush, which had deceived her the evening before, by the appearance of health, had passed away, how wasted he had become.—He had spent the winter in Italy, with Edward Longcroft for his companion, and at first thought himself benefitted by the climate; but as the spring approached, he, with the restlessness peculiar to his malady, longed for something of a more invigorating air; and what he, as well as Edward, considered a most happy chance, in their chart of destiny, tempted him to fix upon

the valleys of Piedmont, as the next scene of their wanderings.

“You will soon be better in these sweet scenes,” said Catherine, to him, as she took his hand with the endearing tenderness which suffering inspires and authorises, “my dear father is surprisingly better, in the few months we have been here—you must drink goat’s milk—I will bring it to you myself, every morning. I have a favorite goat, which Mariette has taught me to milk—and you cannot think how gentle the pretty creature is.”

“She is a happy goat,” said Edward, “Amalthea, I dare say, was nothing to her, though she was the nurse of Jove.”

“At any rate, the milk, will be nectar, from your hand,” said Lord Hervey, catching Edward’s style of compliment.

“Very pretty, and very classical,” said Catherine, laughing, “but you must neither of you

say fine things here: they do not harmonize with the manners of the good people we are among; and see, poor Mariette looks quite grave—you must remember, neither she, nor any of the family speak one word of English; therefore, all our conversations must be in Italian or French; and you must, moreover, prepare yourselves, not only to hear all my blunders unmoved, but to correct them, in all charity, whensoever they may occur.”

Their chat was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Neville, and Arnaud, both in their canonicals, ready to set out on their way to church; for the service was that day to be celebrated five miles off, at some considerable ascent among the mountains, for the benefit of such families as had already taken up their residence for the approaching summer, with their cattle, in the more elevated regions of their minister's jurisdiction.

Nearly all the population of the village had

already set out, and might be seen in parties of five or six together, taking their way by different paths, and engaged in the serious conversation for which they gladly on the sabbath exchanged the toils of the week.

Lord Hervey was unequal to the fatigue of the walk, and the sharp breezes of the mountains rendered it equally ineligible for him to attempt the distance on horseback ; he therefore found himself reluctantly compelled to remain at the Presbytery, with Margaret, whose cheerful and familiar countenance was a domestication in itself, to wait upon him, and the gentle Mariette to join with him in the devotions of the day, which she proposed herself, with all the simplicity of her native manners, as soon as she found he was not capable of attending the celebration of them in public worship.

Never was there a more delightful pilgrimage, as it might be termed, to a sacred shrine, than the walk of Edward Longcroft with Catherine

to the little church among the mountains. At every turn in the road, every winding in the path, there was something to delight or awe: sometimes they looked down on a cheerful hamlet, sheltered with orchards, brightening in fruits and flowers, refreshed by streams, and soothed with rills;—sometimes they plunged into wild glens, or dreary passes, where nature itself appeared to have been rent asunder with convulsive throes, and to have scattered the rocks around, in appalling fragments, or inaccessible masses, among which the foaming torrents dashed impetuously along, giving a living majesty, a moving grandeur to the scenes which would otherwise have presented only the stillness of desolation.

Every spot was fraught with some historic event, some moving recollection, which alternately awakened the zeal or sensibility of Arnaud, as he pointed them out to the observation of his companions.

“It was from these mountains,” said he, his eye kindling as he spoke, “that the cry of ‘Death, rather than the Mass!’ resounded from one to another; that the valleys caught it from the echoes, and sent forth the faithful to the honors of martyrdom and glorious death. It was to these very mountains that our persecuted Victor Amadeus came for refuge from his enemies, and found it in the loyalty of the very people whom he had just before hunted out like wild beasts, and destroyed with fire and sword—but I will not dwell upon these frightful times,”—and turning from his younger children, who walked at his side, he added in a lower tone, “we speak as little as possible of these things before our young people, lest we should, unwittingly implant in their hearts, before their judgment is sufficiently matured to correct the sentiments of resentment and hatred, which are as incompatible with Christian duty, as the crimes that may have served to engender

them. And alas ! even now, they see and hear too much of the injustice we are exposed to, not to feel quite as lively an indignation against our oppressors, as it is wholesome to indulge in, and somewhat more.”

Mr. Neville and Edward Longcroft, exchanged looks, that sufficiently expressed how admirable this Christian forbearance appeared in their eyes—they did not sully it by the language of compliment ; but the good Pastor felt that he was understood by them, and continued.

“ It was among these mountains that Henri Arnaud, my favored ancestor, of blessed memory, girded on the sword of the Lord, and took a solemn oath, never to resign it, till he had reinstated the thirteen altars of our sanctuaries, in the purity of their original worship. It would turn your daughter’s cheek pale, my good brother, were I to relate half, what he and his followers suffered in these fastnesses ; but you must read them in his own account of ‘ *La*

Glorieuse Rentrée;’ look at these barren crags, what places for human beings to winter in, destitute of a change of garments, half famished for want of food, not daring to light a fire, for fear of betraying the place of their shelter; ‘they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world is not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.’ Lift up your eyes to these cliffs, seemingly inaccessible to all but the eagle! yet the Lord guided the feet and strengthened the hands of his children, to scale them, even in the night; and perhaps the very darkness contributed to their safety; for often, when day-light came, they shuddered, even the bravest of them, to see the dangers they had incurred, the apparently insurmountable difficulties they had overcome. Truly might they say, ‘the Lord was a lanthorn unto their feet, and a light unto their paths.’—He it

was who 'taught their hands to war, and their fingers to fight, and sent them help out of his holy hill!' No, assuredly it is not among these mountains and valleys, that our people can ever lose sight of their religion, and of the mercies which have sustained them in it, even unto this day."

Mr. Neville uttered some words in a low tone, of which *Est genius loci* reached the ear of the minister, who smiled, and finished the quotation.

Such was the discourse that beguiled the the road, till they reached the point where, hollowed partly out of the rocks, stood the little church, where service was to be performed—the congregation were assembling, the bell which summoned them together, was answered by the bells in the distant valleys, the clear blue vault of heaven, seemed a fit and gracious canopy, for worship so pure, and devotion so fervent; and when the voice of the people

poured out in full chorus the beautiful consolations of the twenty-third psalm,

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,”

it seemed to recall the days of the primitive Christians, when they also fled to the wildest spots to offer up their worship secure from their persecutors, in houses “not made with hands,” and on “high places,” sanctified to them by the Spirit of God.

When the service was concluded, a scene, scarcely less impressive, followed, of exhortation and enquiry, between the Pastor and his flock, scattered as it now was over the mountains. One wished him to go one way, another, another; all pressed him to go to their huts and chalêts for refreshment, and as he had two other churches to serve, at some distance, during the day, he agreed to make his rounds among them, so as to bring him to the nearest point for each in succession,—the honest moun-

taineers pressed the strangers to accompany the minister, and partake such fare as they could set before them; but the fear that Lord Hervey might think their absence long, prevented their compliance, which otherwise would have been as great a pleasure to them as to those who invited them. They, therefore, took leave of their host until the evening, and retraced their steps, being rested by their attendance at Church, and refreshed by a cup of milk from a neighboring chalêt.

“What a contrast,” said Catherine to Edward Longcroft, “is this little church among the mountains, to the fashionable churches in London,—when I saw the benches of hewn stone, without any distinction of pews, the simple pulpit, the unadorned altar, the rough walls, backed by the solid rock,—I bethought me of your uncle’s pew, in Mary-le-bonne, carpetted like a drawing-room, lined with crimson cloth, padded like a carriage, for the more

luxurious ease of the shoulders that rested against it: the chandelier, the fire-place, with its polished cut steel fender and fire-irons, and Mr. Longcroft rattling them and regularly stirring the fire, as soon as the text was given out."

"Why, Catherine, you are satirical, my child," said Mr. Neville, "how is that? do not you know that if these poor mountaineers were proud of the poverty of their church, its simplicity would be fully as offensive in the sight of the Almighty as all the pomp of Mary-le-bonne, or any other edifice of the same character."

"No, my dear father, I am not in any mood to satirize," said Catherine, "but I always used to feel uncomfortable in that church, the distinctions were so very aristocratic; it made it seem as if the object to which it was consecrated, was merely a form of polite society; the fault might be in myself, but, I must own,

that I never could feel half the devotion, sitting by the fire-side—with a velvet cushion at my back—and my feet on an ottoman—in Mr. Longcroft's pew, that I did at our own dear Nethercross, and at this little church in the desert here."

"Catherine is right!" said Edward, "there ought to be no distinction of persons in places of worship, there is none in Catholic Churches, the good sense of the people teaches them all to take their places, with a decent regard to their respective conditions, and that is enough—open pews and open doors, are what we might borrow, with great advantage, from our continental neighbours."

"Yes," said Mr. Neville, "and, as our friend Arnaud, is not here to start at my acknowledgment, I must say, I should be very glad of their pictured walls, and ornamented altars, now that we could combine them with the purity of an amended form of worship:—"

I do love a religion of types, when not made to stand in place of the things typified,—I suppose I may say so without fear of being condemned as not orthodox. The remark that the real splendor and perfection of a state, is when the utmost pomp and magnificence in public matters is combined with simplicity in private life and individual habits, will apply as well to the ornamenting of churches, as any other national treasures,—so it was in ancient Greece, and early Rome; but we shall not see these days in England, I fear, nor any where else, where steam-coaches and rail-roads, and flying-ships and aquatic-balloons, are perpetually at work to minister to restless whims, and absorb the money which might, if people staid at home, and lived within their means, be devoted to public benefits.” And so, with many a sage description on the comparative advantages and disadvantages of poverty and luxury, and many a pause to contemplate the magnificence

of nature, which surrounded them, they finally regained the Presbytery, and found Lord Hervey quietly engaged with a volume of "Arnaud's Discourses," whilst Margaret was milking at the door, and Mariette laying the cloth for dinner, which Lord Hervey, with amiable consideration had ordered to be brought from the "Eagle's Nest," in order to put the family to as little inconvenience as possible.

"Never have I had so enchanting a walk as that of this morning, Catherine," said Edward Longcroft, "my imagination, my heart, my soul, have all been entranced in it."

"Yes," said Catherine, "it was very delightful—I enjoyed the service so much too, and that beautiful sermon of our good Pastor's was so soothing, so consolatory;—it is enough to reconcile one to tears, to listen to his exposition of 'Blessed are those that weep.'" She sighed as she spoke, and Edward sighed too,

for he felt that his remark and her reply were dictated by very different feelings.

At dinner Catherine made Lord Hervey sit next to her, and addressed herself chiefly to him, it might be on account of his health, which always kept her attentions alive towards him; or it might be, that as she had been away from him all the morning, he seemed to have a right to a double share of her society in the evening; still it appeared, to Edward, that she did so to avoid himself; and under this mortifying idea, his countenance lost all the glow it had acquired during the morning's walk. "If our acquaintance must be subjected to formalities like these," he inwardly murmured, "it will be impossible for me to remain here; I could better bear a total separation than a restrained intercourse; I must set her mind at ease, however I may torture my own heart."

Fortunately the conversation turned upon topics in which all were enabled to join with

equal interest. Mariette and the younger branches having withdrawn, on account of attending an evening-school, Mr. Neville was enabled to enter freely into consultation with Lord Hervey and Edward, on the excellences and necessities of their host, as well as those of his flock: Lord Hervey venerating the piety, and charmed with the simplicity of the people, was liberal in his offers of assistance to them, and when the minister returned late, after a day of extraordinary fatigue, having officiated at three churches, and compassed a distance of thirty miles,—he was cheered over his evening repast, with his turning to the benevolent schemes which had been concocted in his absence, for the welfare of his people and himself; he would not, however, hear of appropriating to his own family, any unequal share of either Mr. Neville's, or Lord Hervey's bounty.

“My brethren want it even more than myself,”

he said, “the venerable and learned Peyrani, our respected Moderator, at Pomaretto, has been obliged, in his old age, actually to sell the most valuable of his books and manuscripts, for bread; and few among us have more than the bare necessities of life, of the plainest and most frugal kind—but I am comparatively rich, I have an income equal to forty pounds a year of your money, and a field which I generally till myself, with the assistance of my grandsons—and blessed be God, I have hitherto never wanted bread for my family or myself; nor have I ever been obliged to send the needy traveller empty away, from my humble door.”

Lord Hervey insisted upon giving Victor the sum necessary for the completion of his clerical education, at Geneva,—and this proposition his grandfather acceded to, with grateful satisfaction, as his native district did not afford the means of advancing him in his studies; and to follow them elsewhere, was utterly beyond his

own reach. To the schools also in the district, Lord Hervey made liberal donations, and Mr. Neville was thus enabled to appropriate the portion of his own funds, which he had set aside for that purpose, more immediately to the augmentation of the comforts of his clerical brethren, in these retired, yet persecuted regions. For these funds he had not the slightest doubt, in his own mind, but that he was indebted to Lord Hervey; and he had told him so, and returned his thanks accordingly;—but Lord Hervey did not reckon it among the most agreeable occurrences of life, as some one has said, who has at least the credit of sincerity, in confessing it, to

“ Do good by stealth, and *then* to find it fame,”

he was sincere in his desire of concealment, and looked so unfeignedly uncomfortable, when Mr. Neville imputed this service to him, that the good man, as single-minded as himself, thought

it more really grateful, to dwell no longer on a sense of obligation, which he did not doubt Lord Hervey was convinced he felt more deeply than it could be expressed in words.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD HABITS RESUMED.

THE next day, Edward Longcroft was early in his attendance on his friends, and had the good fortune, as in spite of all his resolutions he could not but think it, to find Catherine alone.

“What a dream it appears, that I should once more find myself by your side, Catherine,” said he, “and in these romantic valleys too!—how little did I think, when I longed to see them, that

their beauties would be associated, in all my after-life, with the enchanting recollection of having found the dearest friends of my heart among them."

"Yes," said Catherine, confused by his manner, and embarrassed how to reply, "it was delightful to meet so unexpectedly—but the moment I heard the tones of your flute it brought past scenes before my eyes. It recalled the 'Shepherdess of the Alps' to my imagination—you remember the opening, when Adelaide hears Fenrose playing on the flute?"

"Yes, I remember reading the story to you and Louisa, in the summer-house. I will take my flute with me when we walk out, to hear how it will sound among the mountain echoes. Ah, Catherine, will you fancy me Fenrose?—will you be my Adelaide?"

Scarcely had Edward suffered these words to escape him than he saw by the change in Catherine's countenance, that they pained and

embarrassed her; and he instantly reproached himself for having allowed them to escape his lips.

“I am to blame,” said he, “dear Catherine, —nay do not withdraw your hand this once:— I may call you dear Catherine, when you consider how long we have been acquainted. But I am aware that I ought not, situated as we now are, to make any allusion to the past: we shall be much together here, of necessity; we must—it is my happiness to think so—but I should grieve to find that our friendly intercourse might be any way irksome to you. Be assured, then, that I will never say one word that shall give you pain—regard me as your friend—your brother—and I—I will forget, or endeavour to forget, that I have ever wished to be any thing more dear to you.”

Edward spoke these last words with a rapidity that almost deprived him of utterance; and Catherine, with her eyes fixed upon the ground,

remained in a state of most painful embarrassment. After a short pause, during which she durst not look at him, he went on more composedly :—" For your father's sake, for poor Hervey's, our intercourse must be cheerful and unrestrained—besides, my own circumstances are a sufficient guarantee for my silence on any subject you interdict. I am no longer what I was once considered—I have nothing but poverty to offer any one—is it likely I should seek to involve the object of my adoration in its hardships. No, Catherine, rely on it, when my uncle's fiat threw me on the world without resources, save in my own industry, it ridded you of any danger from my importunities."

He paused again, and Catherine, fluttered and distressed, was glad of an excuse to weep on this allusion to his altered fortunes, the cause of which she felt had originated in herself.

" Nay, Catherine," said Edward, and he was involuntarily about to take her hand, but

checked himself, "do not think that I regret the loss of my uncle's property—it would have been too dearly bought with years of dependence, and enslaved feelings. I thank God, I have health and talent enough to earn a subsistence for myself; alone as I shall henceforth in all probability be in the world,—" he paused, overcome with strong emotion; but presently proceeded—"There is but one thing connected with the loss I regret, and that is, the destruction of my parliamentary prospects. I had hoped to have had a voice in the councils of the first nation in the world, in the amelioration and enlightenment through her relations, of the human race—perhaps to have been ranked among its benefactors; but the dream of glory is ended, and now I must be contented to do the duties that may fall to my lot in a humble sphere, and console myself with Milton's beautiful assurance,

"they also serve, who only stand and wait."

“Yes,” said Catherine, smiling, through her tears, and irradiating Edward’s heart with the fire-glow that overspread her countenance, “and we are told by as great a poet as Milton, that

—— ‘lowliness is young ambition’s ladder,’

and I dare say, I shall see you one day at the top of it, turning your ‘upward gaze,’ and

‘scanning the means by which you did ascend.’—”

This little war of wit, had the happy effect of setting both parties at ease, and Edward Longcroft took good care, not to risk a word, a look, that might alarm the confidence he was so anxious to cherish.

He was rewarded for his forbearance, by the interest which Catherine discovered, relative to every thing that had happened to himself, since they parted, and her evident approval of the real, manly independence of his conduct, from the moment he was thrown upon his resources.

“When I took a survey of my possessions,” said he, “and found that my wardrobe, my flute, my pencils, a few books, and thirty or forty pounds in money, which I happened to have in my purse, was every thing in the world that I could call my own, I certainly felt an uncommonly awkward sensation for a few minutes. It was not the being cast upon my own exertions, that appalled me; but what form these exertions were to take that perplexed me—at first thinking that a dinner of herbs, with liberty, solitude, and fresh air, would be far more palatable than the ‘stalled ox,’ which I had latterly seen served up in Berkley Square, with the contentious sauce which rendered it so unsavoury in the estimation of the wisest of men; I was romantic enough to think I would pedestrian, à la Goldsmith,

‘With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire.’

I bethought me, however, that wandering min-

strels, in these degenerate days, were in rather *mauvais odeur*, in all their varieties of guitar, violin, and bag-pipes; and so I resolved to try my talent in drawing, and found that, if I were lucky enough to sell my performances, all I might hope to get was the price of the paper back again.—I shrunk from the remotest idea of Authorship, as I hold it to be a crying sin to augment the many books which are already such a ‘weariness to the flesh,’ unless the author have actually something valuable to communicate, or the plea of being unable to do any thing else to earn an honest livelihood. So, after turning over every scheme I could think of, and rejecting them all, I resolved to set off into Devonshire, and consult Lord Hervey; who might be able, among his own connections, to find something or other by which I might make myself useful.”

“You were right, said Catherine, “ he is so amiable, and his judgment is so sound, for his years, particularly considering how se-

cluded his health has kept him, from any extended intercourse with the world.”

“True,” replied Edward, “but then, by the same rule, he has not been exposed to the prejudices of the world—his judgment is always in the right, because it is impartial—it is only the unimpassioned spectator that can accurately discern the emotions of the crowd.—In my case, however, Hervey was guided solely by his friendship for me,—he entreated me to make his house my home, and to consider his purse as my own—this proposition, however, did not suit either my views or my feelings; not that I have the paltry pride of feeling uneasy under an obligation, for I think with Rousseau *qu’ un don honnête à faire, est toujours honnête à recevoir*, it is only when offered as a bribe, or a bondage, that I would spurn it, did I require its aid—but a man, in full possession of his faculties, and in the prime of life, ought to be able to keep himself independent of individual obligation—reci-

procal service, is another affair. Lord Hervey, consented to see the matter as I did—always regretting the interruptions which his delicate health had occasioned to his studies; and anxious at every interval of convalescence, to make up for his lost time, he entreated me to take upon myself the office of his tutor, and travelling companion, at a salary so much more proportioned to his generosity, than my merits, that I made the reducing it to one half, the positive condition of my acceding to his friendly proposition—I brought him over to my way of thinking—entered on my office the same day, and laid my head on my pillow the same night, perfectly satisfied with being in possession of an honest calling, and a respectable, though humble position in society.”

Catherine was ready to put out her hand to him, in token of her earnest approbation of his real independence of character.—She checked herself, but not before Edward had seen the

involuntary movement; he had command enough over himself, not to notice it, and went on:—

“I was sorry not to let dear Louisa know my plans immediately, but I was certain she would incessantly be imagining I must be in want of something, and endeavouring to supply these wants, in some way that might expose her to the displeasure of her father—I, therefore, did not write to her, till Lord Hervey had domesticated himself for the winter, at Turin;—and my letter being accidentally delayed, it is not more than a fortnight since I heard from her, most affectionately in reply.”

A slight colour mounted into Edward's cheek, as he concluded, and it was reflected on Catherine's, for she immediately felt convinced, that, it was owing to the information Louisa had conveyed in that letter, that Lord Hervey and his friend had guided their course into the valleys of the Waldenses.

From this day the little party seemed to re-

sume all their former habits of unrestrained confidence and social cheerfulness; Catherine, satisfied with Edward's manner, willingly indulged him with her society, and found almost as much pleasure in his; never indeed had she seen him to so much advantage. Relieved from the painful sense of dependence on his uncle, the anxiety of a constrained engagement with his cousin, for whom he had never felt but as a brother, and who he always perceived, regarded him in no other light; his character seemed to gain strength, and his spirits elasticity, from the sublimity of the forms which surrounded him, the purity of the air, which he enhaled with a freshness of enjoyment he had not known since the happy days of childhood, when every thing in nature opens some new perception of delight. There was another source of happiness to Edward, a pure spring deep in his heart of which, unconsciously to himself, he drank large and invigorating draughts—it was

the trusting confidence, that his unremitting though imperceptible assiduities, her own good sense and affectionate disposition, would in time procure a return from Catherine to his own true love.

“ If she is formed for me she must be mine,” he would often say when he left her side, only to carry her image with him into some romantic solitude. “ Nature cannot err when she is left to herself—when neither ambition, avarice, the restraints of the world, or its follies intervene, what can prevent congenial minds from ultimately finding their happiness in each other?” True the time was not yet come—he could not even flatter himself that he saw any signs of its approaching, but—

“ Hope is the lover’s staff,”

and this staff gave firmness to Edward’s steps, whilst he proceeded stedfastly in the path he had laid down to himself, as the most likely to

secure him the object he kept in view, as sufficient reward for every mortal toil.

Lord Hervey, meanwhile, not less susceptible than Edward to the charms of Catherine's conversation, the soul-irradiating expression of her countenance, was still more exposed to their influence, exhibited, as they were perpetually to him, with all the respect she entertained for his virtues, and all the tenderness she felt for his health; whilst Edward was tempted to scale the most rugged cliffs with his gun, in search of game, or in the dangerous and adventurous chase of the chamois, Lord Hervey passed the hours of his absence with Catherine and Mariette, whose story he had heard, with an interest that procured her his marked sympathy.—Sometimes he was enabled to reach such of Catherine's favored haunts, as did not require too much exertion in the ascent; but his greatest enjoyment was to seek with her the placid lake, and sit on the banks with his

fishing-rod, no very formidable enemy to the finny tribe, but now and then interrupting a reflection of his own, or a remark of Catherine's, by drawing up a trout, which after admiring its

“scales bedropped with gold,”

and the piteous expression of its gasping little mouth, he would, at Catherine's request, restore to its liquid element, and derive more pleasure from seeing it rejoin its companions, than from boasting of his success as an angler.

Too often, however, the varying nature of his disease obliged him to keep entirely within doors; and then, whilst Catherine shared Edward's long walks with her father, and their botanizing excursions, he found a gentle companion and most attentive nurse, in Mariette, who gazed on him as on something unearthly, and saw too plainly depicted in the hectic flush of his cheeks, and morbid brilliancy of his eyes, the mandate of that early summons to a better

world, which she equally longed for, and anticipated for herself.

Nevertheless, although a secret bond of sympathy peculiarly attached Mariette to Lord Hervey she was not the less struck with the graces of Edward Longcroft,—“He is so like Amédée!” she would often say,—“ah Miss Neville, I started this morning, when I saw him passing that deep, rapid torrent that falls over the rock, a little above the Church—you know there is no other bridge over it than a fallen Pine, yet he crossed it, with only his hunting spear, to balance his steps, as steadily as any of our mountaineers would have done; his slender elegant figure, was so like Amédée’s at that distance—alas! I almost thought it was himself—and then he has such beautiful teeth—and the fire,—no, not the fire—the lustrous glow of his hazel eyes, and his sweet smile, pensive, as Amédées often was—and his voice too—what a voice he has—it is absolute music.” And

thus she would go on, thinking of Amédée, and describing Edward, till Catherine also began to look at him with a more enquiring eye, and could not help acknowledging that his attractions were, indeed, numerous, and of that happy kind, that stand the test of scrutiny, and increase upon acquaintance. “And then he is so good too,” Mariette would continue—“he is as tender as a woman towards Lord Hervey, and how kind he is to all of us! and as to Mr. Neville, he is as attentive to him as if he were his son; and so would poor Amédée have been to my grandfather, had he been permitted.”—And here the tear that dimmed Mariette’s eye, prevented her from observing that her remark had heightened the colour on Catherine’s cheek, as she thought to herself, “Yes, Edward would have been a comfort to my dear father—he would have been proud of him, for a son-in-law—Alas! wayward is the human heart—how often it will continue to love where it has

ceased to esteem; how often it can only esteem, where it would gladly love.”

Her reflections were however withdrawn from herself, by an event that called forth all her tenderest feelings of sympathy for Mariette.

They were still talking together, when a messenger came to the door, with a small parcel for Victor,—he brought it into the room where his sister and Catherine were sitting at work.—He opened it incautiously before them, and found in it a letter from Pierre; it was sealed with black—he cast an instinctive look towards Mariette, and a foreboding of calamity made him hesitate to break the seal—Mariette saw his hesitation; she turned of ashy paleness.

“Open the letter, Victor,” said she,—“the direction is in Pierre’s hand—he, therefore, is well; and there is only one being on earth to whom that black seal from him can refer.”

Victor, more terrified at his sister’s calmness,

than he would have been by her wildest grief, hastily tore open the letter;—Amédée had fallen in battle,—had died with the name of Mariette on his lips—but already Mariette knew the worst, for in the parcel that had enveloped it, was a black ribbon, to which was attached a crystal heart, containing a lock of her own hair;—a lock which Amédée had cut off, and vowed as he did so, to wear it in his bosom, to his dying day—the ribbon was clotted with blood—he had kept his word—Mariette breathed one long, deep sigh, and fell senseless on the floor.

Catherine's kind attentions recalled her to life—She looked around her, and saw every body in tears—"do not weep," said she "*he* is happy, and I am not more unhappy than I was before—let me go to bed—silence, solitude, and darkness, will restore me to fortitude. It is the decree of heaven, and shall I repine."

Two days did poor Mariette remain alone in her own chamber—Catherine waited upon her herself, and would not suffer her to be broken in upon, certain that she would relieve the anxieties of all who loved her, by appearing among them, as soon as she had conquered the first overwhelming burst of her affliction.—And so it was, for the third day she glided into the parlour, at the accustomed hour for morning prayers, and knelt down in her usual place, opposite to her grandfather, whose voice faltered, even in his devotions, as he looked upon the phantom-wreck of his beloved child; yet she was scarcely paler than before—her voice was a little more broken, but her smile wore its usual melancholy sweetness, and it was only when her grandfather alluded to her affliction in his prayers, that the tears were seen to trickle through her slender fingers, as she covered her

face with her hands; no allusion was made to her grief by any one, but she felt that every one sympathised in it, and she showed her gratitude by going about her domestic duties as usual, and giving a tacit encouragement to the return of cheerfulness in others, by making an effort towards something like the appearance of it in herself.

Some days afterwards, Catherine ventured to express to Mariette, her admiration of the fortitude and resignation she had displayed :

“ It has been a lesson to me, my dear Mariette,” said she, “ which I hope I shall recollect, in all my future trials.”

“ Alas ! my dear Miss Neville,” said poor Mariette, melting into tears at the voice of sympathy, “ I must not take a merit to myself that I do not deserve, the apathy as it would seem to most, that you are kind enough to admire as fortitude, has its origin in a more selfish feeling than resignation : strange to say,

I do not regret Amédée's death—I should never have ceased to weep our separation—but it was inevitable—it was hopeless—it was for life,—and I am not more separated from him now that he is laid in the grave, than I was before, by obstacles which, to both of us, were insuperable and insurmountable,—no, I seem to possess him more surely and entirely, now;—for, O Miss Neville, shall I acknowledge to you the selfishness of my heart—I know no one else can possess him, and therein is my consolation.—Yet it is for that I weep, for my own sinful, selfish nature, that never could bring itself to resign him, as it ought—no, if I had loved him as disinterestedly as I do intensely, I should have wished him to find consolation—for he was blameless, and he ought to have been happy,—but I had not magnanimity enough for this—I would have died with him, or for him, thankfully, joyfully,—but the thought of his ever living with another, was constantly like

a spectre in my heart—it was cruel in me, but I could not give him up.”

“It is not in human nature to do so!” said Catherine, shuddering at the recollection of the pangs she had felt herself.

“It is not in human nature,” replied Mariette, “but it would be in a regenerated nature, which, alas! it is too evident mine is not—for even now, what is my consolation?—not in saying to my Heavenly Father ‘Thy will be done,’ but in thinking that his will has met my wishes, that Amédée is now for ever my own; and, miserable sinner that I am, I feel that even my willingness to leave this world springs more from the hope of being joined with him, in the next, than from the humble and fervent desire of the creature to find itself blest in the adoration of its Creator, and safe in his glorious realms, from either sin or sorrow.”

Catherine deeply impressed with this searching severity of self-censure, in one so young,

feared to offend a conscience so impartial, with any thing that might sound to humility like hers, the language of flattery. So sacred is the intercourse of the heart with its Maker, that even to conjecture its results, is to profane it—and Catherine looked with increased humility and awe into her own, when she reflected that not even the Angels are pure in the sight of God; and that as the brightest chrystal soonest betrays the breath that dims it, so the most exalted natures are most easily offended in themselves, at the slightest speck that mars the perfection which they are constantly desiring to attain.

CHAPTER IX.

MAKING LOVE BY PROXY.

It was many days before the gloom inspired by Mariette's fresh trial could be conquered, in the little circle where she was so tenderly and so justly beloved. Edward Longcroft seemed infected with even more than his share of it, and the more Catherine endeavored to cheer and rouse him, the more imperturbable

did his gravity become,—her father at last remarked it:—

“ I think,” said he, “ Edward Longcroft is not so cheerful as he was, I am afraid he is getting a little tired of his retirement.” Catherine was certain this was not the case; the bare idea of it gave her a feeling as new as it was unpleasant—was it that her vanity was wounded, at the possibility of his becoming weary of a retirement shared by her?—no, Catherine had no vanity to wound—she was as far removed by nature from any thing like a coquette, as the two extremes of her moral temperament could admit of;—who ever, yet, was capable at once of the pure and disinterested passion of love, and the selfish triflings of coquetry? She certainly found the thought of Edward Longcroft leaving Switzerland, whilst she and her father remained in it, very unpleasant to her; partly because his society was extremely beneficial to her father, by con-

tinually tempting him into excursions, from which he always returned invigorated and cheerful, and partly because, from habit, from esteem, from endearing associations, it had become one of her own greatest gratifications.—The very thought of being deprived of it, showed her all its value, and unconsciously, to herself, her attentions to him became more and more marked by kindness, and solicitude to dispel the cloud that had suddenly overspread his countenance.—Her efforts, however, instead of removing, seemed only to increase it,—and at length, finding herself alone with him, her anxiety prompted her to ask him at once the cause.—Still she hesitated—it might be something connected with his situation—his prospects—something over which she could have no power, and which it would therefore be of no use to enquire into.—Whilst she thus argued within herself Edward also seemed to be endeavoring to find words for some communication which he

felt reluctant to make—he walked up and down the room—asked a few common-place questions—and repeated them directly after, forgetting that they had been already answered,—at length he took a chair, and drew it near her :

“ Catherine,” said he, “ I promised you, when I had the happiness of looking forward to spending many weeks almost under the same roof with you, that you should never hear from my lips any language but that of friendship,— I did not then anticipate that my fortitude would be put to the trial as it is at this moment.” Catherine’s heart began to beat quicker—she saw Edward’s agitation—she trembled lest she should have to reproach herself with again making him unhappy. “ Catherine,” he continued, “ forgive me—nay pity me—for I must, I am compelled to ask—if your affections are engaged !”

Catherine started at the question—she turn-

ed pale and red alternately. "Engaged!" she repeated, in a heart-touching tone of despondency, for did not the very word imply a return of affection, a mutual faith; "if you mean by that question to ask me if there is any human being who has a claim upon my affections, assuredly I can answer that there is not;—but you promised me never to introduce a subject of this kind, and I entreat you to spare me the pain of telling you that I cannot listen to it."—And yet, whilst she spoke, her heart smote her for the wound, she could not but be sensible, she was inflicting on a spirit at once gentle and noble, and attached to her with a devotedness, which had shown itself more in its silence, than it could have done in all the utmost eloquence of impassioned phrases; his amiable turn of mind, the real congeniality of his habits and pursuits with hers, the esteem in which he was held by her father and her sister, all pressed upon her reason,

and fain would her feelings have gone over to its assistance.—Perhaps Edward saw the struggle, for with increased agitation he proceeded: “And did you imagine, Catherine, that I should have forced you to tell me this?—no, I should have no excuse to plead for breaking my voluntary promise to you, never to speak of myself, but as a brother; it is my hard task to speak, not of myself, but of one who can offer you every thing I am in want of—fortune, consideration in society, rank, title;—now, Catherine, you know for whom I plead—for whom else could any human power have induced me to solicit the treasure of your——” —the word love he could not bring himself to utter, “of your hand,” he went on, “but for Lord Hervey?”

“For Lord Hervey?” Catherine exclaimed with surprise, in which was mingled something more like disappointment, than in her confusion she could well account for. “How sorry I am

for him!"—This exclamation so full of nature, so decidedly expressive of pity to the object of it, for seeking a boon which she felt it impossible to grant, instantly restored Edward Longcroft to courage and cheerfulness.—

“Dear Catherine!” he could not help saying, in tones which told the relief it had given him: scarcely could he refrain from seizing the hand which hope, ever busy, again told him might, one day, be his own, but he recollected himself—he recollected that his office, at that moment, was to set forth the feelings of his friend, not to give way to his own,—and he acquitted himself tolerably well, to his conscience, by beginning to descant, with all the ease of one who knows they will have no weight with the party to whom they are addressed, the usual arguments of amiability and eligibility, and so forth, but Catherine relieved him immediately from a task equally displeasing to her as to himself, by saying,—

“ There does not need one word more upon the subject,—even could I have felt for Lord Hervey the affection he deserves, I should deem myself utterly unworthy of his, were I capable of taking advantage of his youth, not yet out of his minority, his retired habits, and limited circle of associates, as to consent to his performing a marriage with one so much his inferior in station and fortune as myself,—not that I think equality in these points is always to be insisted on, where the parties, who may have the superiority, are sufficiently experienced in the world to know their relative value,—but this is not the case with Lord Hervey—he has as yet seen nothing to enable him to judge by the standard of comparison, nor, I fear, will he live to do so,—his days are too surely numbered, and, with this conviction on my mind, how base, how worldly should I be, to accept his rank and fortune, when I could not hope to share them with him, or even to

have the opportunity of showing myself grateful for his generosity, by devoting myself to his comfort."

"Catherine!" said Edward, "you are every thing you should be—delicate, disinterested, noble;—but now tell me what I must say to poor Hervey, whose desire to secure to you all those worldly goods, which he, poor fellow, has never hitherto been able to enjoy, has blinded him to the short uncertain tenure, by which, under the mysterious decrees of Providence, he holds them."

"That is what both pains and perplexes me," said Catherine, "and so, dear Edward, I must entreat you to take it entirely upon yourself,—only, be sure, that you say every thing you can think of, that may best soothe his feelings, and convince him of the gratitude which will, from this time, be added to the tender and affectionate esteem I have always felt for him."

The "dear Edward" had involuntarily

escaped Catherine's lips, in her anxiety to make him comprehend all the delicate shades of feeling, which a woman's heart suggests wherewith to

“ Shun the guilt of giving pain,”

but “ trifles light as air,” are as much magnified by the hoping, as the jealous lover, and this gentle epithet, which she had uttered in the very tone of her days of girlish playfulness, now thrilled to his heart, with a power which at once recalled the pleasures of his early youth, and raised up a long perspective train of felicities to come. Forgetting the limits he had so rigidly laid down to himself, he could not suppress a question with which Lord Hervey had, in reality, nothing to do.—

“ O Catherine,” he said, “ will you forgive me if I ask you one question?—Is there *another* whom you prefer to Lord Hervey?”

Catherine colored with something, which

appeared to Edward so much like displeasure, that he dreaded the answer he might have brought upon himself.

“That enquiry,” said she, “has nothing to do with the subject,—and it is one that—pardon me for saying so—you ought not to have allowed yourself to put.”

“No; I was wrong—it was an indelicacy in me,” said Edward, “I ought not to have suffered myself to have been betrayed into it:—yet, Catherine, there is a question I would ask, oh, grant me an answer to it, and I will carry that answer with me even into exile, or to death.”—He was pale as he spoke, and, sinking on his knee, he said, in a voice almost inaudible, “Has Colonel Hamilton any thing to do with your rejection of Lord Hervey?”

“No, Sir,” said Catherine, firmly, “it is due to myself to assure you that he has not.—And now I beg that our conversation may be concluded,”

She rose, and Edward, more chilled by the coldness of the "Sir," so suddenly substituted for "dear Edward," than encouraged by her assurance, that Hamilton had no way influenced her decision, took a leave of her as respectful, as melancholy, as if he had himself been the rejected suitor; and returned to Lord Hervey, who was waiting for him in the full spirit of that hope, which is ever one of the strongest characteristics of the fatal malady under which he labored, which it sustains with its brightest visions, its most deceptive flatteries.

Edward Longcroft certainly did not feel the imparting Catherine's refusal to Lord Hervey, so difficult, or so painful a task, as he had felt imparting Lord Hervey's proposals to Catherine: nevertheless, it was both difficult and painful, though in a much less degree.—Lord Hervey, ignorant of every circumstance attendant on Catherine's acquaintance with Ha-

milton, and entirely unsuspecting of Edward's sentiments for her, little imagined the embarrassing situation in which he placed both, by making Edward at once the confident and interpreter of his affection for Catherine; her soothing attentions, and endearing characteristics had inspired in his breast, during his short stay at Nethercross, his first, and as it seemed fated to be his only passion, heightened by their renewed intimacy, into the conviction that should renovated health and length of days be granted to him, neither his fortune nor position in society, could afford him happiness without her; and that, on the contrary, should he be destined early to resign these worldly advantages for himself, it would be a consolation to him to know, that a portion of them would be secured to one so amiable, so lovely, so favored by nature in her moral, as well as her physical organisation, that she was calculated alike to

adorn an exalted station, or to cheer and aid an humble one—that she would bear his name, and keep up some remembrance of him, in the Hall of his forefathers, and scenes of his childhood; for who yet, however aware of danger, and resigned to fate, could ever bring himself to leave—

——“the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast a longing, lingering look behind.”

Next to the hope of living with Catherine, that of his memory being cherished by her was dear to him,—and acutely did he feel the destruction of the fairy fabric his imagination had raised, even whilst his fevered cheek, and eyes closed in the momentary repose of weakness, told to all around the tale, that his future was not to be of this world. Edward had a delicate commission to execute, he could not bear to let Lord Hervey think that it was

his state of health, that formed the barrier to his wishes; there was a cruelty in that not to be thought of; he placed it principally upon his youth, and Catherine's shrinking repugnance, from the appearance of listening to any declaration of preference, from one who had hitherto had no opportunity of forming his judgment by comparison.

“ Love is not a matter of judgment or comparison,” said the poor sufferer, the crimson spot on his cheek heightened by his agitation; “ there does not need much judgment to decide on excellences like hers; and who is it she would have me compare her with? who would you?—with my fretful, sickly, red-haired cousins, pray? or with my uncle's conceited ward, Lady Augusta—with her pedantry, and criticisms, and her scorn for every thing English?—no, I want no comparisons to satisfy myself with my choice—and, as to my youth, I shall

attain my majority in six months, and I do not ask her hand before I am completely my own master, if she will only give me the hope of returning my affections, of being mine as soon as I take possession of Hervey Hall, which she would grace so well."

Edward could almost have wept to hear his friend and benefactor, thus reckoning upon a period which, scarcely the most sanguine hope, could flatter itself he would live to see.— Strange, indeed, it is that cheerfulness and hope, the most engaging attributes of the human mind, should be found almost the inseparable attendants upon a disease which, to the weeping friends who contemplate it, is, from its very commencement, marked with despair, and entwined with a thousand conflicting feelings, which only renders the termination of them all the more painful, from the suspense in which it has been nursed, for

too truly has one of its most gifted victims
made consumption say—

“ Lover, do not trust her eyes,
When they sparkle most, she dies,
Mother, do not trust her breath,
She will comfort breathe, in death,
Father, do not try to save her,
She is mine, and I must have her.”

CHAPTER X.

A BLANK IN THE CIRCLE.

NOTWITHSTANDING Catherine's even increased attentions to Lord Hervey—notwithstanding the touching assurances she had made him of her sense of his generosity, the value she annexed to his esteem, and the sincerity with which she reciprocated it, he could not but feel that he had no chance, even under happier circumstances of health, of inspiring

her with any feelings more in unison with his own; with a lover there can be no medium degrees of satisfaction, —a passion once declared can rest contented with nothing short of return —and Lord Hervey began to feel that Catherine's kindness, on which he had before built his happiness, was now to him only the grave of his hopes. He tried to rouse sufficient fortitude in himself to meet the conviction which his own solitary, unanswered feelings forced upon him,—but it was his first trial, and he felt it more than he could surmount, in the presence of the object:—he tried to withdraw himself from Catherine's society, and would pass hours with Mariette, who was alike attracted to him by the ties of similarity in their states, and sympathy in their sentiments,—they sometimes went forth together to enjoy the prospect around, from some sheltered nook, or look at the setting sun, lighting it up with a thousand new splendors—but their intercourse

was silent and sad, though gentle and holy as that of disembodied spirits,—it soothed, without removing the dejection of each, but it formed no substitute to Lord Hervey for Catherine's ever-varied talent of delighting, and he still found himself exposed to all its fascinations, even from the very caution she took to spare him any uneasiness,—she kept herself almost entirely within doors, lest Lord Hervey might be hurt if she walked with Edward Longcroft; she laid down her book when he approached, lest he should fancy she wished to avoid his conversation,—and she watched his looks with such anxiety to anticipate his wishes, that he felt it impossible to reconcile himself to his disappointment, whilst he saw in her every thing that was calculated to make him happy—Edward understood and pitied his conflicting feelings. To any other so situated, he would have prescribed the harsh, but salutary medicine of immediate flight, but in this

instance, for the first time in his life, he stood convicted, in his own eyes, of selfishness,—and had not resolution enough to propose leaving the place where Catherine *was*, for the place where she *was not*—according to St. Preux's definition of the two hemispheres of the globe. The restlessness, however, inseparable from bodily uneasiness, such as Lord Hervey labored under, suggested, of itself, the effort which alone was likely to be of any service to that of his mind; he had for some days, probably under the agitation of his feelings, been sensible of increased oppression at his chest, and his cough which had, for a few weeks, appeared to yield to goat's milk, and the balmy breath of spring, now returned with distressing violence.

“ I must,” said he, “ leave these mountain haunts, which were I as that healthy shepherd, whom I could not help envying as he passed us, I could be well-contented never more to

quit; but I feel that, as I am at present, they are not good for me, either in body or mind—we must go—where shall we go to?—I fancy I should like to see Naples, before the summer gets too far advanced,—or shall we go to Marseilles—or Nice—or where?”

Though Edward Longcroft had not had resolution enough to propose their departure, he had sufficient not to throw any obstacle in the way of it, though it was the severest test to which his friendship for Lord Hervey could have been put. In such cases promptness is always desirable—the same day that Lord Hervey’s plan was settled, it was promulgated to the little circle round the table, and the day but one, succeeding, was fixed upon, for his leaving St. Etienne with Edward Longcroft. The last day that friends are to be together is always a mournful one—it appears too long for what we suffer, too short for what we would enjoy—we would willingly turn each moment

of it into an event, because we know full well that memory will cling to each moment as eventful; and in the anxiety to annex to its very minutest incident, an interest beyond what our over-charged feelings are able to sustain, we lose the affectionate enjoyment in the remembrance of which we should afterwards find our greatest consolation.

Fortunately, at the very moment of setting off, a bright gleam of hope and cheerfulness seemed to irradiate the very soul of Lord Hervey, and touched his countenance with angelic light; he seemed to feel a foretaste of some unknown happiness,—the thought that his health might be benefitted by change of air, that when he saw Catherine again he should be out of his minority, and might be able to remove the scruples which Edward Longcroft had chiefly alledged as the reason of her rejecting his suit; the very tears that glittered on her eye-lashes as he bade her adieu, all gave him firmness in

doing so,—and as he embraced the affectionate circle around him, and received the benedictions of the two ministers, for whom he felt almost equal esteem, he perceived not, he knew not that they took leave of him as of one whom they could never hope to greet again. It was settled, however, that Edward Longcroft should keep a regular journal of their proceedings, to be transmitted to the friends they left, and Mr. Neville promised that these despatches should be regularly answered by Catherine, with an account of the transactions, civil, moral and religious, of the valley.

This arrangement seemed to take off much of the parting sorrow—but alas! the very first communication from Edward, awakened the greatest anxiety in the breasts of those whom he had left; for Lord Hervey, whose illness had increased so rapidly on the road, that when they arrived at Nice, Edward judged it imprudent to attempt going any further, and

wrote from the bed-side of the sufferer, his fears, that it would prove his final resting-place. Eleven days passed away in sorrowful suspense that this letter occasioned—the twelfth another arrived:—it was sealed with black, and Catherine felt that all was over;—drowned in tears she took it to her father, for she could not prevail upon herself to open it,—her foreboding was true, and Edward thus communicated the event:

“ My last letter, dear Catherine, will, I feel persuaded, have prepared you for the melancholy event of which this will inform you.

“ Our excellent friend was last night removed from this transitory scene to the eternal world. Sincerely do I sorrow, on my own account, for his loss; but on his—I feel, even whilst I write, how much the epithet of a melancholy event is misapplied when speaking of

his release from a suffering material frame, to rejoice in the freedom of his spiritual nature, and his early entrance upon those heavenly delights and angelic offices, for which his kindly affections, and patient obedience, during his short stay in this probationary state, had, we have every reason to hope, well prepared him.

“ Often have I admired the beautiful personification of Death, by the ancients, in the figure of a young man, with a torch in his hand, which he gradually inverts, till its flame becomes extinguished, whilst on his head rests a nocturnal butterfly, ready to start off, the instant that the last gleam of light disappears,—but oh, how solemnly, yet how sweetly was this allegory explained before my eyes, in the gentle extinction of this dear friend’s mortal powers! without pain, without regret, he calmly, gently breathed out his spirit,—and, more blest than the ancients, I seemed not only to

see the flight of the nocturnal butterfly realised, at the moment that his soul was set at liberty, but to *know* the region to which its flight was winged,—with the ancients this region was only dreary space,—but oh, dear Catherine! what a moment of inexplicable awe is that which separates us, by eternity and spirit, from the friend beloved, the instant before, in time and mat'er! then a being like ourselves, whom, to the last, we sympathise in, and with:—but lo! in one last throb of the heart that has loved us, it is gone, changed! never more to be understood by us, till we ourselves shall for 'corruptible, put on incorruption,' and for 'mortal, immortality.'

“ It was the first time, Catherine, that I had seen death—never could I have contemplated it in a form more divested of the terrors with which our early prejudice invests it; and well do I feel assured that when Man, yet ignorant of sin, 'walked with GOD,' as scripture language, with noble simplicity, expresses it, the

termination of this, his first stage in eternity, was indeed only a 'falling asleep,' a passing, as in the easy transit of a dream, from the fair types of this material world, to the unspeakable glories of the next, which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.' O Catherine, alone, as I am, I feel oppressed by the vastness of my own imaginings, the solemnity of my solitary thoughts! I write close to the couch where yet lie the remains of him whose hand was ever open to serve me—whose voice was ever ready to cheer me;—it seems strange and bewildering, that so near me still, I can no longer seek his sympathy—Catherine, I want consolation, you will not forbid me returning to seek it awhile, in the dear, the honored circle I have left—I want advice too—the world is all before me—but I would fain be guided by your beloved father 'where to choose.'

“ To-morrow, my friend's outward form will

be committed to the earth;—I have chosen such a spot for it as he would himself have loved to think of, and I shall stay in its vicinity some time longer; for, though it may seem a weakness, I cannot bear the idea of leaving the place thus consecrated to me, till I have in some degree familiarised myself with it, that I may not seem to leave his remains among strangers—

‘ Unwept, unhonoured, in a foreign land.’

“ Farewell! whilst I write to you I seem to converse with you—it is only as I conclude my letter that I feel all the sadness of my insolated state.”

Lord Hervey's existence had so long been seen to hang upon an attenuated thread, that the intelligence that it had finally snapped, was only that which every day rendered more probable. The regret for his loss, which the remembrance

of his endearing qualities and patient suffering could not but awaken, was soothed by the christian consolations of Arnaud and Mr. Neville. It was not likely that in a household so consecrated by religion, so trained to resignation, the dispensations of providence should be met with unreasonable grief: and Catherine dried her tears, whilst she listened to the sublime discourses which naturally arose between her father and the pastor, out of their contemplations on the destiny of man, the gradual purification of his nature by suffering, and his capacity for immortal life, to which there is no other entry but by the gate of death.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE IN PROPRIA PERSONÆ.

STILL though Catherine was not dejected, she was serious ; she felt herself in the state that Edward Longcroft described, oppressed by the vastness of her own imaginings, the solemnity of her solitary thoughts, all even painfully exalted by the grandeur of the objects with which she was surrounded, shut out by them, as it were, from every trifling diversion to her medi-

tations. In this mood, longing for the sympathy of some mind possessing more of enthusiasm than she could expect in her father, at his time of life, more strength than she could look for in Mariette, it was not without a feeling of delight which surprised even herself, that she saw Edward Longcroft return, at the end of three weeks after the receipt of his letter.

After the first greetings and condolences were over, it was easy to perceive Edward was animated by new hopes.

“I am come,” said he to Arnaud, who had welcomed him back with the most cordial rejoicing, “to take up my abode in these peaceful scenes. I must find a portion of land that I may be able to hire, and you shall see how well I will manage it, and how steadily I shall drive my team, and guide my plough.”

This declaration, gladly received by all the family, who were delighted with the idea of retaining him among them, led to a more serious

statement of matters in which all around were concerned.

“ It is to Lord Hervey’s kindness,” said he, “ that I am indebted for what is to me independence; for it will make me independent of any man—Rothschild himself cannot be more, and, in fact, is not half so much. But it is not only myself that poor Hervey, in his affection, remembered; there is not one of his friends whom he has forgotten.” Edward took a paper out of his pocket-book as he spoke; it was Lord Hervey’s will. Catherine’s eyes filled with tears, as she recognised the crest with which it had been sealed; and it was some minutes before Edward’s voice was sufficiently firm to read the bequests of the generous departed.

At the time of his death Lord Hervey was still in his minority; his estates were all entailed, and, though simple in all his own expenses, the munificence of his charities and the liberality of his disposition had prevented him

from saving any thing from his allotted income. He had, however, ten thousand pounds at his own disposal—half of this sum he bequeathed in legacies of remembrance to his relations, and provision for his dependents in England—the other half he indulged himself in disposing of according to the dictates of his heart. To Edward Longcroft he left three thousand pounds, to Catherine Neville one, with a beautiful watch of his mothers, which he had always kept with peculiar reverence; to Mr. Neville five hundred, and to the venerable Arnaud the same sum, to be by him disposed of as he should think fit—to Mariette, her sister and brothers he left remembrances out of his personal property—nor was even Margaret forgotten, he left her twenty guineas, and had himself put them into a green silk purse, which the affectionate girl said she valued more than the money, because it had been his own, and she had seen it in his hand. All the books he had with him, being chiefly on

subjects of devotion he left to Arnaud, for the benefit of his people: in short, in the minutest particulars of this his last transaction with the world he was about to quit, he showed himself governed by the same kind and considerate spirit which had regulated every action of his blameless life.

“ It is said by our divine Master, that ‘ it is more blessed to give than to receive, ’ ” remarked Mr. Neville; “ but in what a pure spirit of charity must that be given which makes the receiver as happy as the giver—grateful for the benefit—contented to be the medium for the exercise of another’s virtues. I believe that the uneasiness too often felt under an obligation, arises more from a covert tyranny, an offensive exaltation in the obliger, than in that pride or ingratitude on the part of the obliged, to which it is generally attributed by those who look on the darkest side of human nature; but by the excellent young man whose name we have all, and I more than

any of us reason to bless, we are each of us benefitted, and have, at the same time, the delight of hoping that he also is now reaping the reward of the benevolent disposition which thus prompted him to minister to our comforts.”

Edward Longcroft was in earnest when he said he had come to take up his abode in the valleys of the Vaudois. His imagination was enchanted with the scenery, his affections were interested in the inhabitants, the income which would give him every thing he could desire, with their simple habits, would, in England, scarcely lift him above want ; there his place in society would be worse than lost, it would be a perpetual inconvenience to him, without the means of keeping up the external shew proportioned to it, in the judgment of the many who hate those who will not spend, and despise those who cannot. All this he explained in his long walks with Catherine, which, now that she had no longer the fear of wounding poor Lord Her-

vey's feelings, she was as glad to resume as he was. They had now the additional interest of a decided object, in searching for some favored spot that should present sufficient attractions to decide Edward in the choice of his humble home.

“Yes, Catherine,” he said, “I am determined to have on this habitable globe one spot of land on which I can place my foot and say it is my own. I will try to augment my little store, if I can, for I confess I am not naturally fond either of limited means, or limited importance; but I will be prudent, and do nothing to risk an independence which, however small, is enough for my real wants, and for which I cannot be too grateful. I have indeed, Catherine, seen more of the world in the short space of my altered fortunes than I should ever have done in years of prosperity: and well may it be said, that he who has known nothing else, has never seen more than one side of the human heart.”

“Well, no one could look more steadily on

the worst side than yourself," said Catherine, "or make a better use of the lesson you would take from it."

"I do not know that," said Edward smiling, "it made me guilty of writing a sonnet in a fit of spleen."

"I am glad it was a sonnet," said Catherine, "because you were obliged, at any rate, to limit your ill humour in small compass; and, as a proper penance for indulging in it at all, I command you to repeat your fourteen lines to me, that I may know whether they are composed according to rule."

"I cannot repeat them," said Edward, because to do so with proper emphasis, I ought to be as angry as when I wrote them—and it is scarcely possible for a frame of mind to be more exactly opposite to that in which I am at this moment—but you shall not be deprived of the gratification of crucifying me, as poor Burns said, with your criticisms—he accordingly drew

forth the sonnet from his pocket book, and gave it to Catherine:

‘ I hate thee FORTUNE ! not because thy frown
Hath robbed me of hereditary right,
Of social comfort and refined delight,
For I could bear their loss, though early flown—
But that thy fickle breath aside hath blown
The veil that hid men’s *motives* from my sight,
And kept my best affections from the blight
Of chill distrust, to sad experience known.
No,—should the turn of thy inconstant wheel
Lift me above ambition’s wildest dream,
Save I could drink of Lethe’s fabled stream,
Thy flatteries could not *now* this truth conceal
The voice of praise, the sacred name of friend,
On no desert beyond thy treacherous smile extend.”

Catherine returned it to him with a smile.

“ Well,” said Edward, “ what do you say to my *coup d’essai* ?”

“ I shall not say it is a *coup de maitre*,” said she, “ because I am very angry with you, in ‘ the sacred name of friend,’ for making any such sweeping denunciations.”

“Ah, but I recant them now,” said Edward, with an animation that brought all the colour into Catherine’s cheeks; “I should never more complain of fortune if the little boon she has now granted me, were deemed enough by the object of my love, to share it with me.”

Catherine turned towards home, her eyes were fixed on the path she began to retrace, but Edward continued to plead his suit with an energy he had never ventured to use before, because never before had he felt the happiness of being able to offer her an independence, honourable though humble, which might be augmented by his own exertions, and which for her sake he would make it his first duty never to risk any diminution of. Catherine’s candour and good sense found it difficult to resist his arguments. She could not bear to make him unhappy by continuing to reject the affections of a heart so constant—but, alas! what had she to return them with.

“I feel all the value of your regard,” said she, “it is returned fully and entirely on my part with esteem, nay, more than esteem—but—” she could not proceed, she could find no words to tell him that she had loved.

“I know what you would say, Catherine,—I will spare you the pain of telling me it,” said Edward, with a rapidity of utterance that betrayed his agitation, “you have loved another—alas! for me to have the misery of knowing it; but an affection like mine can pardon even that—yet, why did you Catherine suffer any other to make an impression on your heart? you ought to have felt that it was mine, that I had a right to it, for having given you my own, almost before I knew its language.”

“You must not be unjust,” said Catherine, “how could I imagine any thing of the kind, when I knew of your engagement with your cousin; it was that knowledge which made me always feel so at ease,—so happy in your company.”

“ Ah, Catherine, Louisa was more penetrating—she read my feelings better,—and kind and generous as she is, she early set me at ease with respect to the engagement between us; though it was not until I perceived her own growing partiality for Mr. Dacres, that I felt myself at full liberty to indulge my own earliest prepossessions. Alas! perhaps if I had avowed them sooner, I might have been spared all that I have felt—but, I will talk no more on this subject—I will not look back—too happy if you give me the most distant hope of rewarding, in time, my constant love.—Yes, Catherine, it is my pride to think, that never, since the first day I saw you, has my heart for one instant acknowledged any other impulse—I was a boy, a mere boy—I well remember, I had gone to church with my dear mother,—we sate in your father’s pew;—it was long before your sister was married,—she was there—you wore a straw bonnet, with lilac ribbons, and you had a little bouquet of jessa-

mine in your girdle—it fell out as you left the pew, I picked it up, and behold,” taking a withered sprig out of his pocket-book, “it still retains, at least I fancy so, some of its fragrance. I longed for the next sunday; and when it came, my dear mother commended me for being ready to go to church, so long before I was summoned—that sunday, Louisa went with us; and after church, we called at the Rectory, and ever after, how many, many happy days did I spend there, from time to time, when I came to Longcroft Hall, in the vacation;—but, after Mrs. Barton’s marriage, I was so afraid my attentions might be remarked, that I seldom ventured to come alone, for I knew too well my own feelings, and I thought if my uncle suspected them, he might forbid my visiting at the Rectory, at all—and then my troubles began.—Ah Catherine, you know not half what you have caused me.”

“Do not reproach me,” said Catherine, “I must behave better for the future.”

Edward seized her hand,

“Ah Catherine,” he exclaimed, “the future, the happy future—will it be passed together by us? O say that we shall not be separated any more!”

Catherine hesitated—one moment Hamilton rose to her remembrance, such as she had first known him—the next, she reproached herself for thinking of him.

“Is he not already the husband of another,” she said to herself,—“and were he not, could he ever be mine!—too surely not.”

She felt that if her hand was once plighted to Edward’s, she should be secured against herself; and that, whilst she made another happy, she could never be entirely unhappy herself.

“Hamilton voluntarily threw up his claim on my affections, when he knew how wholly they were devoted to him,—I have no right to sacrifice the recollection of him, the happiness of a man whose love is so disinterested as to take me as I am.” Such was Catherine’s silent argument with herself, and Edward

reaped all the benefit of it, in gaining her consent, or rather, in meeting with no opposition to his entreaty, that he might be allowed to lay his proposals before Mr. Neville.

To see his darling daughter the wife of Edward Longcroft was indeed the dearest wish of Mr. Neville's heart, the height of his ambition; and he would have received him full as gladly with his little income of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, as if he had been in possession of all his uncle's landed property—besides he could give Catherine a thousand pounds himself, which he had saved for her, out of the moderate proceeds of his living, and she had now another of her own, through the kindness of Lord Hervey. All this together would make up to the young couple an income fully equal to that of Nethercross, for which his own beloved wife had waited, with patient constancy, eight years; for he loved her too well to join her fate with his on the slender provision of a curacy.

Of all the evils attendant on a luxurious state of society, he thought the celibacy to which, from its multiplied artificial wants, it condemns a large portion of the female sex, and the consequent selfish and profligate habits it produced among men, one of the most unhappy in its effect.—Viewing Marriage as the express ordinance of Divine Wisdom and Love, the type, in itself, of the Union of those Attributes in Infinite Perfection, he considered it as the only state in which human beings could be as virtuous, as rational, and as happy, as the diversities of human life, and the trials for which we enter upon it, will admit of,—and he not only thought that—

“*Earthly*—happier is the rose distill’d,”

but that, even with reference to a heavenly state, the progress of moral and religious improvement could never be effected so completely in “single blessedness,” as in that per-

petual remuneration of self, that sweet reciprocity of kindness and forgiveness, that sincerity of mutual advice, that enlarged sphere of charity and usefulness, which the marriage state admits of, in its conjugal, its paternal and its social obligations. Much of the celibacy which he regretted to see so prevalent, Mr. Neville attributed to the short-sighted ambition of parents in the middle ranks of life ; inducing them first, to educate their daughters on a scale inconsistent with their own position in society, and, then, banishing them from their paternal roof, all the spring-time of their life, to hide their bloom and consume their youth, in seclusion and dependence, as governesses in some titled, or fashionable family, the habits of which might ever afterwards unfit them for their natural station. Far, rather would Mr. Neville have seen his own daughters, with the simplicity of patriarchal times, spin thier linen at his fire-side, and wash it in the nearest

brook, than he would have spent the whole of what little he could spare for them, in a superficial acquirement of showy accomplishments, to qualify them for becoming servants in every sense, but the most advantageous one, in the families of strangers, all the best part of their life, and return, in the decline of it, every way incapacitated for being mistresses of their own; he had always advised the wealthier farmers, and others among the more substantial of his parishioners, from giving way to this imaginary *gentility*, which was sure to return their daughters on their hands, single and sad, when they might have been happy wives and tender mothers, had they remained at home, occupied in their domestic employments, which, after all, set the female character in its most endearing and attractive light, and are so far from interfering with real mental refinement, that many of our brightest and most solid examples of female talent, are to be found in the retirement of do-

mestic life, and the active superintendence of its duties.—Warmly then did Mr. Neville advocate, with his beloved daughter, the cause of Edward Longcroft; in whom he saw every qualification likely to make the marriage-state, with such a partner, honourable and happy.

Catherine listened to her father's arguments with duteous submission; her own reason responded to their justness—her heart acknowledged Edward's virtues, and was touched by his devotedness; she had no longer a single plea, even with herself, for refusing to reward it with her hand; and in his transports of gratitude, and her father's approving blessing, she found all the compensation she desired, for her virtuous subjugation of her own feelings, her solemn resolution to subdue the Memory of the Past.

The abode that Edward fixed upon was in the true Swiss style of pastoral beauty, and with more of refinement in its interior than he had

hoped to find; for the walls were lined with walnut wood, and the furniture was quite good enough, with the additions that could be easily made to it from the nearest town, to give the idea of English comfort. It was situated on the declivity of a gentle rising, which gradually swelled into a background of sheltering mountains. It was shaded by a fruitful orchard, to which the aged trunks and branching arms of a few chesnut and walnut trees, gave the more solemn character of a grove. In the front a garden, well stocked with fruit and flowers, sloped down into the valley, and was terminated by a little river, which ran murmuring over its pebbled bed, as if imitative of the mountain torrents by which it was sometimes swelled to the very verge of its enamelled banks. Behind was the farm-yard, with all its busy accompaniments; and Catherine was pleased to see that the sitting-room had one window that looked into it, like that at Blackthorn Cottage; giving

it a peculiar feature of domestic cheerfulness, whilst the other, commanding the distant mountains, with their ever dazzling summits, caught all the glories of the setting sun.

“Can you be happy here, dear Catherine?” asked Edward, when he shewed her the place of his choice—“In such a secluded spot?”

“In such a sweet retirement rather,” replied Catherine, adding, with her usual frankness,—“Yes, Edward, indeed I can, if I make you so; I shall have nothing more to wish for, excepting we could have Amelia and Henry Barton, and dear Louisa transported to us.”

“Perhaps we may,” said Edward, “at any rate we can transport ourselves to them, when I find myself farmer enough to venture on my agricultural speculations in England. It is not a banishment, dear Catherine, that I would have asked you to share with me.”

In fact Edward had been determined in his desire to spend some time in Switzerland, by

the most delicate regard for Catherine's feelings. He wished to secure her from any chance of even hearing the name of Hamilton, until time should have absorbed every painful remembrance of him, in the sweet approving sense of her fulfilment of the sacred duties she was about to take upon herself. Her father saw the matter in the same light, and thus, without the necessity of any verbal explanation, the simple perception of right, consummated by a sympathetic understanding, effected an arrangement that was satisfactory to all parties.

Amid the grandest features of nature, combined with her mildest beauties, beneath skies of a deep and cloudless blue, that seemed the very hue of serenity and hope, it was that Catherine Neville plighted her faith, at the sacred altar, in the little church of St. Etienne, and became the wife of Edward Longcroft. Fer- vently did her father bless her, as she rose from her knees, with tears and smiles struggling for

pre-eminence. But benedictions, flowers, and songs of gladness, forbade every thought, every recollection, save that she was now joined, in holy and indissoluble union, to an excellent young man, in whose wisdom she might hope to be instructed, in his love to be protected and cherished, the remainder of her earthly career, and by his example to be guided in the path to eternal life.

CHAPTER XII.

A PEEP AT OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

WE will now leave Catherine awhile to deck her cottage-home, to gladden her husband's entrance with her smiles, to cheer her father's heart by the sight of her contentment, and to bless the inhabitants around by her social courtesies and willing charities.

What, meanwhile, were Hamilton's occupations, retrospections and anticipations? During

the time that the legal advisers of Sir William Forsyth were preparing their instructions for the plea for a divorce, Hamilton remained at Brussels, devoured with vexation and overwhelmed with self-reproach, or rather, we may say, selfish reproach; for it is too often the consequences, and not the nature of a crime, that the guilty party laments over, and if Hamilton could have escaped that promulgation of his conduct, which he knew would draw down upon him the condemnation of every one whose good opinion was worth having, we fear his own secret knowledge of it would have troubled his conscience as little as his countenance. A hundred times a day he execrated the folly of Lady Charlotte, but her guilt he treated much more leniently; because that alone would not have exposed himself to personal inconvenience—not that he was without considerable qualms on the subject, as he contemplated the near approach of the period when, according to the punctilios

of modern honor, she would expect him to make her his wife, as, according to her representation, through him, she would be no longer Sir William's. At such times how bitter was the contrast to him of Catherine's purity, her native graces, her genuine talents, her endearing virtues, and above all, her devoted affection for himself, with the foreign morality and manners, the showy superficies of acquirement, the insatiable appetite for praise, the contempt for domestic duties, which had made Lady Charlotte the meteor of a circle cold and glittering as herself. He knew too well the tenderness of Catherine's heart, not to feel too surely that it would be almost broken by his desertion of her. He knew that the sight of her sorrow would shadow Mr. Neville's placid brow with anxiety—he knew, in short, that he had plunged into grief all those whom it would most have delighted him to have made happy; and his heart was too good not to feel the severest pangs at

the thought of the unhappiness he had caused in the little sheltering spot where he had sought an asylum, and found peace. His regrets had not the relief of communication, for he felt that to attempt to renew, either by letter, or in person, any intercourse with those whose hospitality he had already so outraged, could only be deemed an aggravation of his offence, and he passed month after month at Brussels, fretted by "the law's delay," yet dreading that determination of it which would call upon him to assert the honor of the lady he had subjected to its decision, by resigning his own into her keeping.

The death of Sir William Forsyth filled Hamilton with as much remorse as if he had seen him fall by his own pistol-shot; for he felt he was the real cause of a more painful and lingering exit to him. But alas! the habit of calculating the effect of every occurrence on our own immediate interests, is, in the worldly-minded, at any rate, all-powerful; and few indeed are

there to whom Dean Swift's biting satire will not apply :—

“ In all distresses of our friends
 We first consult our private ends,
 And Nature, kindly bent to ease us,
 Finds out some circumstance to please us.”

On this principle it was that Hamilton, when he had recovered from the agitation into which the intelligence of Sir William Forsyth's death had at first thrown him, began to acknowledge to himself, that it would be much more agreeable to his feelings, and more conducive to his respectability in society, to marry Lady Charlotte, if marry her he must, as Sir William's widow, than as his divorced wife.

The lady herself, meanwhile, regulated all her proceedings by what she was pleased to call the strictest propriety. She had retired to her father's seat in Wales, whilst the divorce was pending, and consoled herself for her temporary seclusion, by anticipating a delightful residence

on the continent, when things were *amicably settled*, as Lady Charlotte Hamilton, and, at a future, though she hoped not far distant, period, as the Countess of Winterdale. To be sure the old Earl had publicly turned his back upon her, at an entertainment given by Prince Petersbourgskoi, but that only shewed that he was a Goth, and boxed himself up, in his old castle in Northumberland, till he forgot how to behave himself when he stalked forth into the world—she was willing, also, to hope that he might be excused on the score of growing blind—he was certainly deaf, as when she addressed an enquiry after his health to him, in her most mellifluous tone, he turned away, as if he heard her not.

Like Hamilton, her ladyship had her feelings of remorse, on hearing of the death of her husband, and, like him, she speedily consoled herself by considerations of the advantages to be derived from it—the foremost among which was that it would save her the unpleasantness of an *exposé*, which, after all, was “a very annoy-

ing thing ;” not that it would impede her introduction into the society she contemplated mixing with, or obscure her *éclat* in it, but that it might be an obstacle to her reception at foreign courts, as it was certain to be an insuperable bar to presentation at her own. When, however, she saw Hamilton, for the first time after Sir William’s death, she could not wholly suppress some ‘*compunctious visitings,*’ of nature and conscience. The recollection of the kindness, the abused kindness of the departed, the sight of the man who was henceforth to supply his place, as husband, protector, friend, the man whom she had, for a time, exclusively admired, and who retained his influence over her, by the very indifference he showed in exciting it, all agitated her with new and contending feelings ; and Lady Charlotte wept—and wept real tears—unmixed with artifice or passion.—Hamilton was affected by this evidence of genuine emotion, and pressed her to his breast, with the feelings of a man who earnestly desired to make

what reparation remained to him for the wrong he had committed.—Never before had he deemed it possible that Lady Charlotte might in herself possess any thing that could reward him for his self-sacrifice in doing so—but now, as she stood like Melpomene, in her flowing sables, her ebon locks combed plainly on her lofty brow, the lustre of her eyes softened, not dimmed, in tears, her voice musical in its sadness, and every gesture eloquent in the agitation that dictated it, Hamilton only thought of her beauty, her graces, and, still selfish, congratulated himself with the idea, that he might trust for her favourable reception in society, as his wife, to the argument placed under the portrait of a lady of similar attractions, and eccentricities, in the last century,

“ If to her share some female errors fall,
Look in her face, and you'll forget them all.”

Ladies, however, cannot always look their most interesting looks, or attitudinize their most

graceful attitudes—it is the *average* quantity of pleasing expression and good feeling that must influence the sum total of domestic happiness; and in every thing quiet and consistent, Lady Charlotte was certain to be found deficient. The intervening space that decency required, between her exchanging her first weeds for bridal attire, was very unfavourable to the continuance of the better opinion which Hamilton had for a moment entertained of her heart.

Fretful at the long retirement, which circumstances had imposed upon her, she did not find Hamilton such a host in himself, as to console her for the absence of others equally fashionable, and more attentive, for they had more to wish for.

She certainly had loved Hamilton, according to her idea of love, and she might in the same way have loved him longer; but it must have been Hamilton, gallant, gay, admired, as she had been accustomed to see him, in a crowd;

not continually alone, often inattentive,—sometimes sad; lounging on a sofa, almost unconscious of her presence, with half-closed eyes, before which the form of Catherine Neville seemed to flit, as in a waking dream,—Then came jealousy, and its inevitable companion, ill-humour, to cloud her ladyship's countenance, and mar the efforts to please, which her habitual vanity would otherwise have suggested—and Hamilton had the misery of finding it irksome to spend a single evening alone, with the woman, with whom he felt himself bound to pass the remainder of his life.—The time, however, approached, which, at any rate, would have the advantage of entitling them to keep out of each other's way.—The first six month's of Lady Charlotte's mourning were expired—she found out that to lengthen the period, would be affectation.—Hamilton tried to say it would be cruelty, but he could not bring himself to add to his moral responsibilities by so gratuitous a falsehood, for he felt it would not deceive even

her to whom it was addressed; he therefore, contented himself with saying, that, situated as they were in the eyes of the world, the sooner they joined their fates, and their establishments, the sooner they should have a chance of regaining the respectability which was essential to their comfort in society.—Her ladyship bit her lips at this plain statement; but, however, she herself was in no humour to be romantic, and felt that she desired nothing more consolatory, than to be whirled in a handsome new travelling carriage and four, to Paris, with Hamilton by her side, and a lawful claim upon his introduction of her into circles where, at all events, she should see him sufficiently admired to justify her choice.

“And when he is Earl of Winterdale,” thought she, “he will look better still,—a title always sets a man off, and I do not suppose I shall be less attractive myself, for being a Countess.”

So with this agreeable idea, she smiled con-

sent, and sate down to her writing desk, to give directions to her jeweller and dress maker, whilst Hamilton begged a sheet of paper of her, for an epistle to his uncle. After beginning that and another, he finally succeeded with a third, in making a beginning, a middle, and an end; in which he informed the Earl that he was about to lead the beautiful and accomplished Lady Charlotte Forsyth to the altar—not forgetting to add, that the lady was without incumbrance, and had a splendid jointure, entirely at her own disposal.”

To this statement Hamilton had the following answer by return of post.

“DEAR NEPHEW,

“ Since you have so high an opinion of matrimony, as to imagine that you may find honor and happiness in it, even with such a help-mate as Lady Charlotte Forsyth, you cannot be surprised, when I inform you, that I

also, have resolved to venture upon trying its efficacy, particularly as having known the object of my choice ever since her childhood; indeed she is not yet out of her teens, and having witnessed the progress of her virtuous and rational education, under a most virtuous and rational mother, I am not afraid of having any follies but my own to answer for;—I have long suspected that your habits and pursuits were utterly incompatible with such as I should wish to see in the heir to my title and estates—your letter of this morning confirms the idea, and also the resolution with which that confirmation was connected in my own mind.—I shall lead Lady Mary Clipchase, the youngest daughter of my old friend and neighbor, the Earl of Tynemouth, to the altar, in my own parish church, next Wednesday morning; for I am no friend to midnight weddings in a corner of a drawing-room, and when we get a reformed parliament, which people, who would

be better employed in reforming themselves, make so much talk about, I hope they will be declared illegal. I shall be very happy to introduce you to your Aunt, should you choose to come into Northumberland, and take the chance of breaking your neck after the hounds, before you noose yourself for life, barring the not unusual remedy of divorce. I must beg leave to premise, however, that this invitation does not extend to the commencement of your honeymoon, or to any period after its termination.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ My dear Nephew, yours, &c.,

“ WINTERDALE.”

This letter stung Hamilton to the quick, by its satire, and very seriously concerned him, by the blow it gave to the hopes in which he had for the last ten years been encouraged to indulge in, of succeeding to his Uncle's titles and

estates; his habits, naturally expensive, had been rendered still more so, by the splendid fortune which he had accustomed himself to consider as almost within his grasp, and this sudden alteration in his prospects, was not more mortifying to his ambition, than it was trying in a pecuniary point of view.—He quailed more at the thought of poverty, for such he considered his pay and six-hundred a year, all that his extravagance had left him, more than he would have done at being called on to head the forlornest of Forlorn Hopes.

“I have placed myself in a pretty position!” he exclaimed, tearing the letter into atoms; “a pretty first-fruits of my matrimonial speculation—I suppose the next time I hear from my uncle, it will be to invite me to the christening—perhaps to stand godfather.—Yes, yes, I see my fate—no earldom for me.—It will be Lady Charlotte and Colonel Hamilton—and I too, of all men, who have always

hated the idea of a titled wife and an untitled husband.—No not in one single iota, should a woman ever fancy herself superior to her husband.”

And here Catherine’s deference for him, so beautifully mixed up with her love, rushed into his mind, and he could not hide it from himself that if he had been faithful and true to her, he should not have been exposed to the mortification he then felt, for he knew his uncle would have been contented to see him make a choice comparatively humble, that had so many virtues and graces to plead in its behalf.

Three days after this, Hamilton saw the announcement of the Earl of Winterdale’s marriage with Lady Mary Chipchase, seventh daughter of the Earl of Tynemouth, in all the papers—attended with an account of the bridal festivities which were stated to have been celebrated by the tenantry, and a large party of the surrounding nobility, and gentry, in the true style of genuine old English hospitality.

“Seventh daughter!” groaned Hamilton, “no want of nephews and nieces for the future. Well! I must go to Rundell and Bridge, to countermand my orders there—and to my coach-maker, to tell him to vamp me up some second-hand travelling carriage, instead of building me a new one—and then I must look in upon Lady Charlotte, to know if she has fixed the *happy day*—I wonder if she read the papers this morning.” So up he started, choose his handsomest morning coat, that he might not look as he felt, and armed himself with fortitude to meet the condolences of his fashionable friends on the event which he well knew would very speedily reduce himself to a non-entity among them.

It requires but little reflection on life, to be able to discover that many of its events, which we may have repiningly classed among its severest misfortunes, have afterwards proved themselves to have been “blessings in disguise,” and certainly Lord Winterdale’s marriage, if it

deprived Colonel Hamilton of the hope of future augmentation of rank and fortune, had at least the happy effect of releasing him from a forced union which would inevitably have rendered all his possessions joyless to him.

Lady Charlotte Forsyth was just inhaling the aromatic perfume of her chocolate, when the newspaper was brought in, and on the same salver with it a note folded with elaborate ingenuity from Prince Petersbourgskoi; when opened, her ladyship found it to contain an offer of marriage—accompanied by references to his Highness's rent roll, and genealogical tree, which might have awakened ambition in the bosom of many a less aspiring lady than Lady Charlotte.

“Princess Petersbourgskoi,” she repeated to herself, “Countess of Winterdale—there is something more sterling, after all, in an English title,—but then that is to wait for, and this to be had immediately; but then again,

Prince Petersbourgskoi is an ugly, yellow-haired, mean-looking little man, and Lady Loverule says he starved his first wife to death—and Hamilton is a noble looking creature—and Lady Caroline Agneau is dying for him; so I will be honorable to him, and give the Prince his dismissal.”

So saying, she sipped her chocolate, and took up the paper;—the very first paragraph she cast her eyes upon, was the Earl of Winterdale’s marriage. She opened the Prince’s note again, gave it a second perusal, and an hour afterwards he received an answer to it, every way flattering to his vanity, and agreeable to his wishes.

Such is the susceptibility of our self-love, that the most worthless object may possess the power to wound it.—Hamilton was too rational not to rejoice at the escape Lady Charlotte’s cold-heartedness afforded him, from a union with her, which he felt convinced would have

rendered him one of the most unhappy of men ; yet he did not receive his congé from her fair hand, written the evening before her marriage, on rose-coloured paper, and sealed with the graces decking the altar of Hymen, without considerable mortification to his vanity—his better feelings also were deeply wounded in the recollection, that to secure to her, as far as he could, her position in society, and make her all the amends in his power for yielding to her guilty allurements ; for in fact, his conduct had all the blandishments of female artifice to plead in its excuse, he had broken off the only real attachment he ever felt, plunged an innocent confiding heart into affliction, ruined all his own prospects, and, in return, was cast off unfeelingly, at the very moment when, if she had had a spark of generosity in her nature, she would have rejoiced in the power her own large fortune afforded her, of making up for that alteration in his, to which he had exposed himself by his

sense of honour and consideration towards herself.

The illusions of youth had long passed away from Hamilton's mind; the illusions of fortune were now rapidly following, and he found he should very soon have no impediments thrown in his way, by flatterers, to seeing himself and the world exactly as they existed.—He had flown to Paris in the first moments of his vexation; but meeting there more of his old acquaintance, with gayer faces than his own, than he was at that time willing to encounter, he proceeded to Italy. Running through the usual route, and the usual routine of dissipation and folly, he only found his discontent with others, and his disgust with himself, increase.

“I shall become a misanthrope, a downright Timon,” said he, “if I do not seek some wiser remedy for my vexations, than acting over the same follies, in different latitudes—It was not so when Catherine chid me with such sweet ear-

nestness, for all my bad qualities, and warmed all my good ones in her sunny smiles."

It was near Christmas when he made this reflection, and in the beginning of January he was in England, and on his way to Nethercross.

CHAPTER XIII.

OLD SCENES REVISITED.

THE wheels of the chaise rattled over the rugged lane, encrisped with frost, as Hamilton drove up towards the Rectory. A bright moon was

“ rising o'er the accustomed oak,”

whose broad arms Catherine had pointed out to him, in the first walk they had ever taken, and across which the owl, with its wild, and fancy-

stirring screech, regularly flitted at even-tide ; the Rectory was almost hidden in the piricanthus that covered the walls, and relieved with its scarlet berries the dazzling whiteness of the snow that sparkled, like frosted silver, on the leaves—it seemed emblematic at once of the purity of Catherine, and of her cheerfulness ;—such as it was when he first knew her. His heart reproached him with the thought how much that innocent cheerfulness had been subdued, under his unkind neglect ; but it throbbed with delight at the prospect of so soon pleading for her forgiveness, and restoring smiles to her countenance, and sunshine to her breast.

Agitated with feelings which were blended with every thing good and noble in his nature, he could not bear that the noise of the chaise should rudely break the stillness of the Rectory. He would approach it gently, and alone—so he dismissed the chaise at the bottom of the lane, sent it to the King's Arms, and walked up to

the house. Ah, what a moment it was to him, when his hand trembled on the knocker!—Catherine might have deemed herself almost avenged for all her sufferings, could such a sentiment have existed in her nature, as his heart sunk within him, when a pale, thin young man in black, opened the door.

“Gracious Heaven!” exclaimed Hamilton, “is Mr. Neville dead?”

“I hope not Sir,” said the young man, mildly “when we heard from him last, he was better.”

“Better! what, then, has he been ill?”

“Yes, Sir, very ill,—but it was chiefly on Miss Neville’s account, I believe, that he went abroad.”

Abroad! how sad a note of separation did that word sound in Hamilton’s ears! how palpable did it make the distance seem between him and her whom, only the minute before, he had in imagination strained to his breast!

The young man saw that he struggled with

some powerful feeling, and opening the door wider,—

“Pray walk in, Sir,” he said, leading the way to Mr. Neville’s study,—“this is the only room with a fire—but Rachel will return in a quarter of an hour, and she shall light one in the parlour—I am Mr. Neville’s Curate, and I prefer this little room for myself, because it contains the books more immediately connected with my duties.”

“A fire is unnecessary for me,” said Hamilton, though he shivered as he spoke, “I cannot stay,—but, with your leave, I will sit down a few minutes, in the parlour.—I know the way.”

The pale young man, whose placid countenance was the index of a sedate and well regulated mind, concluded that Hamilton must have some reason for preferring to be alone, in a room without a fire, in a frosty night in January,—he therefore turned quietly round, to resume his studies, and Hamilton was left to “chew

the cud" of "his bitter fancy," without the least admixture of sweet, wherewith to qualify it.

The room in which he had spent so many happy hours, now chilled him by that precise neatness, and exact arrangement of every thing in its place; which, in the country, distinguishes what is called "the best parlour," when not in use. Catherine's portrait, when a girl of thirteen, with her apron full of wild flowers, hung over the chimney piece. When she was present to compare it with, he had always, according to the invariable custom of complimenting the model, at the expense of the artist, told her it did not do her justice;—but now he gazed upon its sweet and innocent expression, till the original seemed brought before his eyes; and when he turned away from it, and looked towards Mr. Neville's, which hung opposite, it seemed as if the grave, though benevolent countenance, reproached him, for having inflicted such cruel pangs on one so lovely and so good.

He would have left the house, but the desire to obtain all the information he could from Rachel, for he felt an invincible objection to putting any questions to the young Curate, still detained him.—At length, the little gate creaked on its hinges, and he heard Rachel coming up the garden, accompanied by Cæsar, who gave a growl, as he sniffed out the presence of a stranger; but the moment he saw Hamilton, he flew up to him, with all the welcome of a friend.

“Ah poor fellow, poor Cæsar, still glad to see me!” cried Hamilton, at the same time that he thought to himself, “had he flown at my throat, instead of licking my hands, the reception would have been more truly what I deserve.”

Rachel screamed with surprise at the sight of Hamilton,—a surprise not unmixed with pleasure; for he had won all hearts in the Rectory, but the pleasure was made up of a many remembrances and regrets, that the tears ran down

the poor old woman's cheeks, as she narrated to him her little history of "Miss Catherine's taking on so," when she returned from Blackthorn Cottage, and found he had been at the Rectory during her absence—and of Mr. Neville fretting himself into the jaundice, with grief at seeing his daughter grow so pale, and thin—and of their setting off for foreign parts; not, she thanked God, among the Roman Papists, for she believed in that part of Switzerland, where they were, the people were all Christians, but ——— and here Rachel made a sudden, and full stop, for she recollected that it was her master's parting injunction to her, never to mention the place of their destination, or any thing connected with them to Hamilton, or any of his emissaries; should any enquiry ever be made by him upon the subject—not a word more, therefore, could be got from her,—indeed, she had a double motive for keeping silent, for she could no more bear to wound

Hamilton, than to disobey her master by telling him of Catherine's marriage—for Rachel was versed enough in the language of the heart to read the various feelings that were struggling in his; and she thought it would be quite punishment enough for all his faults, whenever he did hear of it.

“But it shall not be now,” thought she, “at any rate, when he is so disappointed, and tired too, I warrant, with travelling, and mercy me! starved with cold too—for it went clear out of my head that we were standing talking, without a spark of fire in grate!”

She was just beginning her apologies, and rattling among the tea-things, but Hamilton told her he could not take any thing.

“O Sir, you must have a cup of tea,” said Rachel, “but perhaps you have not had any dinner—if you came by coach—they tear away so, I've heard folks say, that there's never time to get a mouthful of any thing in a comfortable

way—but if you would like a nice rasher of ham, Sir, and an egg, I can do it in a minute.”

“No, Rachel,” said Hamilton, “it would choke me—give me Mr. Neville’s address, and let me be gone.”

“I cannot give you it Sir,” said Rachel, “for I have not got it,—letters all goes to Miss Longcroft’s, and she sends answers.”—she paused a moment—“there is a book,” she continued, doubting how far she was swerving from her duty in mentioning it,—“that Miss Catherine left with me for your honor, in case, poor thing! any thing happened her, among them there mountains, and wild people—but perhaps she would be angry if she knew I gave it you now.”

“No Rachel—that she would not be,—give it me I entreat you—I shall never ask another favour of you.”

Rachel went out of the room with her apron to her eyes.—She returned in a minute with

the book.—Hamilton seized it,—kissed it;—shook Rachel by the hand, slipped a sovereign into it; and casting a farewell look round the apartment, left the house; and in a quarter of an hour afterwards was on his road back to London.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW DUTIES—NEW PLEASURES.

THE two years, meanwhile so loaded with mortification to Hamilton, had been fraught with the purest contentment to Edward and Catherine—the tender wife had also become a happy mother; and oh, what an era in her existence was that moment when she first clasped an innocent breathing being to her heart, and welcomed it to the life she had given it! She

was actually overwhelmed with the excess of feelings so new, and so delightful, and often hid her face, to hide also the sensibility so beautifully so mysteriously awakened, that it could only express itself in tears. How exquisite was the joy of Edward at this accession to his Catherine's happiness! this precious seal to her affection—and doubly did he caress the infant whom he thus regarded as the most sacred bond of their mutual confidence, and daily increasing love. Mariette petitioned so sweetly for the office of head nurse, that Margaret, who looked upon it as hers by right, relinquished her claim, because, as she told her mistress, the poor young lady having been crossed in love wanted something to be fond of.

Mariette did indeed find a soothing solace to her own desolated heart, as she lulled the innocent little being upon her bosom, listened to its first murmuring notes of satisfaction, and marked the first dawnings of intelligence in its tiny features. It was not long after this accession

to Catherine's duties and pleasures, that she saw in "Galignani's Messenger," which somehow or other finds its way into the most secluded corners, as well as the gayest cities, a paragraph announcing the birth of a son and heir to the Earl of Winterdale. For a moment Catherine felt something of painful interest in this abrupt revival of recollections which it had been her unceasing endeavour to consign to oblivion.

"But surely," thought she, "I, who am so happy in the sweetness of my own maternal feelings, ought to rejoice that Lady Charlotte has got a similar tie, which may attach her sincerely to her husband, and reconcile her to domestic life. She is not Lady Charlotte, however, any longer, it should seem—I am glad of it—she will be gratified with being Countess of Winterdale—and I am glad this child is announced as son and heir of the Earl of Winterdale."

She would not even to herself pronounce the

name of Hamilton ; but she felt a sadness that day, for which she could not account. Perhaps if there is one act of heroism that human nature is unequal to, it is for a woman to rejoice sincerely in the thought of the man whom she has loved being entirely happy with another.

Six months had now passed away, and the infant Neville, for so he was called after his grandfather, was every day becoming a personage of more and more importance in the delighted eyes of his papa and mamma, when one morning a letter arrived from England, directed in an unsteady hand ; but still Edward saw it was the hand of Mr. Longcroft—and he forthwith read its contents aloud :—

Longcroft Hall.

“ SIR,

“ Your cousin, Miss Longcroft, has been as wise as yourself, in chusing to be guided in her election of a partner for life by

her own judgment rather than mine. She has, this morning, become the wife of Mr. Dacres, and as such I no longer consider her as my daughter. She would have paid me the compliment of waiting till my death, I believe, but when I found her determination was fixed, I chose to have as much time as I could, before that event, to make such arrangements as I feel called upon, by this second and final disappointment of my reasonable hopes.

“ If you do not consider it too much trouble to come to England, once more to see your uncle and early benefactor, I beg you will set off immediately on the receipt of this, and travel with all convenient speed, as otherwise it is, according to the report of my medical men, by no means improbable that you will not again see

“ Your still affectionate Uncle,

“ EDWARD WYNDHAM CHOLMONDELY LONGCROFT,”

No sooner was the letter concluded than a cabinet council was held relative to the proceedings to be adopted. That Edward must set off for England was agreed to, on all sides; though tears came into Catherine's eyes, as she said so, and then she kissed her baby, and smiled through them, when Edward told her he would be back in less than a couple of months.

“But it is indeed indispensable,” said he, “not only on my Uncle's account, but on dear Louisa's. I must reconcile her father to her marriage—I am sure he may be much more proud of Mr. Dacres, for his son-in-law, than of that empty-headed Lord Blakeney; though I beg pardon for speaking of him so disrespectfully, before Catherine—I recollect he was one of her prime favorites.”

Catherine laughed—but she coloured too, as she recollected the grounds on which this alleged favoritism had rested.

Mr. Neville, ever since he had seen his daugh-

ter so happily united to the man whom of all others he thought best adapted to make her happy, had been intending to return to England; for he felt, now that he was relieved from his uneasiness on her account, and his own health re-established, that his duties called him back again to his flock; but Catherine found so many arguments to detain him, that month after month passed away, without his having resolution to abide by the period he from time to time fixed for his departure. First he must stay till she was thoroughly settled in her new abode, his presence gave it such a home-like look—and then he must not leave her before the birth of her child—it must have its grandfather's blessing: and then he must stay till they could find some one returning to England, to accompany him—he should not go by himself, that was certain—and this last condition seemed to involve an indefinite period of detention, so unlikely did it appear that any one from England

would be found in a region that had neither gaiety nor fashion to attract strangers. Now, however, there was no longer any excuse to be found for further delay. Catherine's abode had certainly got as home-like a look as she could desire—her child had received its grandfather's blessing a thousand times told—and her husband would be his travelling companion, and see him comfortably reinstated at Nethercross.

Catherine's affections, warm and expansive as they were, had nothing selfish in them. She felt that her sister had equal claim with herself to the affection and society of their dear parent, and she acknowledged also that his people had a right to expect him back again. She therefore, when the moment of parting actually came, unexpected as it at last was, made a strong effort over her feelings, that she might not cloud her father's remembrances of the happy time they had spent together, with the thought of having taken his farewell of her in sorrow from the

same real affection, when Edward pressed her to his bosom, with manly tenderness, not disgraced by a tear that started into his eye as he looked first at her and then at the baby sleeping on her bosom, though she felt all the loss she was about to sustain for a time in his absence, she yet cheered both him and herself with speaking only of his return, and avoided, with almost superstitious care, a single word that might be construed into any omen she would not willingly accept.

It was not, however, Catherine only that had cause for regret, in this dispersion of her little household—the village, the surrounding hamlets, the Pastor and his family, all felt it; and whilst their prayers followed the travellers, their kindest attentions were exerted towards Catherine herself, to lessen her sense of their absence. Her anxiety to hear of their progress, was relieved by letters from every halting place; nay, the driver, at the very first stage in the

journey, though only two leagues from St. Etienne, was the bearer in his return, of an epistle from Edward, fraught with all the tenderness of a husband and father, joined to the courtesies of a lover—At length he wrote from England, from Longcroft Hall.—He had seen Mr. Neville affectionately welcomed by Amelia, and her husband, who were in readiness to receive him, and who greeted Edward as their brother-in-law, with equal pride and delight; he proceeded the same evening to his uncle, whom he found labouring under severe indisposition, aggravated by his displeasure against his daughter, who, being pressed by him to listen to the proposals of the Marquis of Carhampton, had declared her attachment to Mr. Dacres, and her fixed resolution never to listen to the overtures of any other person; expressing, at the same time, her readiness, nay, her desire, never to leave her father, during his life time.

“What, that I may be reminded every day

of your disobedience, and my misfortune ?” said her father.—“ No, Miss Longcroft—you have your whim, and I have mine.—If you are bent upon marrying a pedagogue, a village schoolmaster, the sooner you do it, the better.—I beg leave to say that I no longer consider my house as your home ; and, as with such a diversity of opinions, a residence under the same roof cannot be agreeable to either of us ; I shall appoint yours, for the present, with your aunt in Cornwall.”

Now this aunt in Cornwall was one of the most unfortunate-tempered ladies in England ; at least, so Mr. Longcroft had always found her : as he never could agree with her for a single day.

The idea of being treated like a fractious school-girl, and sent away to a place of punishment, (for in no other light could she consider it,) at that distance from all she valued, was too much even for Louisa’s patience. She had

long silenced the dearest wishes of her heart, in dutiful submission to her father's will; but she had quite spirit enough not to suffer them to be crushed beneath his tyranny. She had ten thousand pounds at her own disposal, in virtue of her mother's jointure—the income arising from this sum, in addition to a living in the neighbourhood of Skipton, which had been offered a few weeks before to Mr. Dacres, would enable him to give up the mastership at G——, and Louisa informed her father, respectfully, but firmly, that, if he was resolved to exile her, from her paternal roof, she should prefer a house of her own, where she might still find consolation in the performance of her duties, to a forced visit to her aunt, from whom the utmost attention to her caprices, would not gain her one word of kindness in return."

Mr. Longcroft was inexorable, Mr. Dacres eloquent, and the consequence was, that Louisa, though drowned in tears, at the absence

of her father's blessing, gave her hand to the man who had long possessed her heart—the marriage ceremony was performed with the utmost privacy at Nethercross, and they set off, from the altar, to Mr. Dacres's new residence at Skipton; where in his devoted and most respectable tenderness, and the duties, above all others suited to her feelings, which she conceived to devolve upon her as the wife of a Christian minister;—Louisa endeavoured to console herself for her father's continued resentment.

When Mr. Longcroft saw Edward again, a gleam of satisfaction lighted up his sunken eye. Edward, greatly affected at his uncle's altered looks, and recollecting at that moment only the real services he had received from him, took his offered hand, and pressed it with an emotion which for some time could find no relief in words. Mr. Longcroft felt all its sincerity.

“ I am glad to see you here again, Edward

Longcroft," it seemed to give him pleasure to dwell upon the name, "you have lost no time in complying with my wishes—yes, you are more really dutiful than your cousin, who made greater professions, has proved herself. I make no doubt that you saw how matters were with her and that puritanical fellow she has chosen for her husband. If it had not been for him, you and I should never have misunderstood each other—but, however, I now wish every thing to be considered as made up between us. You are my brother's son, after all; and your children will have more of the real family blood in their veins, than Mrs. Dacres's will. Yours will have the name too,—and that pragmatistical puppy, Mr. Dacres, had the insolence to tell me that nothing should induce him to change his own name; because, forsooth, it was linked, somehow or other, with that of Sir Philip Sidney. I am glad you have a 'boy—I wish you had married a little higher—but you did not

know, then, what I intend to do for you ; a man, moreover, can always give rank to his wife, but a woman never can to her husband—no—I suppose Miss Longcroft, I beg her pardon, Mrs. Dacres, may be quite contented if she should see her husband arrive at the honor of a vicarage. Give me that anti-spasmodic tincture, Edward—two large spoonful—I feel a dreadful twinge—and ring the bell to hasten dinner—you must want something—I take nothing myself but slops and rice.”

It will be easily believed, that Edward used his most strenuous efforts to restore Louisa to her father's favour—but in this point he found his uncle inexorable ; and the utmost concession he could obtain from him was, permission to visit his cousin, occasionally, provided he always returned to the Hall in time for dinner. Poor Louisa never saw him approach, without a flutter of hope, that he might be the bearer of some conciliatory message from her father, and

never parted from him without tears, at the thought that any, she might send by him, would be unattended to;—but with all of us,

“ Our web of life is of a mingled yarn,”

and if it had not been for the alloy of grief to Louisa, on account of her father's unkindness, and concern to Mr. Dacres at the sight of it, their portion would have been one of perfect felicity; a state, which we may rest assured, would be inimical to the eternal interests of man; as, never since his creation, has there been a single instance on record of its having fallen to his mortal lot.

CHAPTER XV.

AN UNEXPECTED RENCONTRE.

IN the sweet intercourse of letters, the endearments of her baby, the kind attentions of the Pastor and his family, the performance of her own duties, and the resources of her own cultivated mind, Catherine found day after day glide peacefully away.—Edward sometimes in his letters expressed his fear, lest she might find her solitude tedious—but he said so, more to

be gratified by her assurances to the contrary, than that he really imagined it.

“No,” she replied to him, “my dearest friend—it is not the want of any other society, but the being deprived of yours, that would make me feel solitary equally in a crowd, and indeed far more so, than amid this magnificence of nature, where all around me tends to soothe and elevate my soul;—but I hold with Rousseau, that there is no real separation for those who love—and that hearts truly joined in sympathy, would touch each other, even at the very extremities of the earth. When I want more immediately to communicate with yours, I take your little son, (I have only just now sent him out with Mariette, that I may write to you;) into my arms, and kiss him, and then I am certain both our hearts throb in unison;—it is a theory of my own—a new discovery in galvanism—tell me if you are a convert to it.—No, assuredly I am in no danger of suffering

from *ennui* ; besides I may say with Molier—
“ *Vous connoissez d’ailleurs mon penchant pour ce genre de solitude, si conforme à mes goûts, et à mon ambition ; et qui me représente, avec quelque douceur, l’image de ma vie entière ; des hauteurs menaçantes qui present sur moi, des precipices profonds, qui s’ouvrent à mes pieds, mais un chemin étroit, où je suis sur de ne rencontrer personne, quoique la nature bien veillants l’ait embelli de quelques fleurs modestes, qu’on chercheroit inutilement ailleurs. Si un ruisseau qui ne se trahit que par son murmure, le borde de temps en temps, caché d’un côté sous la vôte oblique des montagnes, voilé de l’autre, par une ombre impénétrable ; il n’a jamais répété sur sa glace obscure que le foible mouvement des rameaux qui le couronnent comme un dais. Jamais il n’a bercé les feux du soleil, ou l’argent des étoiles, et quand il s’abime dans le torrent commun, apres avoir paisiblement accompli sa course, entres des rives inconnues, il y disparaît, sans nom, comme s’il*

n'avoit pas été. C'est ainsi qu'il est doux, de passer sur la terre—"

Catherine was just concluding her quotation, when a shadow was thrown across her paper—she looked up, to the window—a figure had flitted past it, so swiftly, that she scarcely discerned it—yes surely,—but it could not be—the height, the gait, the impatient tread, was that of Hamilton—the blood seemed ice-bound in Catherine's veins.

“It is impossible,” said she, and that instant the shadow again obscured her letter;—the figure returned,—the doors were open,—and in rushed Hamilton.

“At last, Catherine!” he exclaimed, “at last then I have found you!” he was going to embrace her, but Catherine drew back, and her deadly pale was exchanged in an instant for a suffusion of the deepest red. He felt that he deserved the rebuke—but that did not prevent him from kissing the hand she extended towards

him, in the welcome which the spirit of hospitality, hereditary in her nature, would not suffer her to withhold.

“ I have visited every village and hamlet in this whole district,” said Hamilton, all animation, and throwing himself on a settee without waiting to be asked, “ in order to find out you and your father. I knew you were in some of these protestant cantons, for though Rachel could not give me any other intelligence, she took care to inform me that you were among Christians, and not Roman Papists.”

“ Poor dear Rachel !” said Catherine, “ you have been at Nethercross then—and was that all she told you ?”

“ Yes, and enough too,” said Hamilton, “ since it enabled me to steer my course right at last. It was by mere accident though that I stumbled upon this pretty cottage. I had clambered half way up to the top of that pinnacle to the left, with the cloud resting on it ; I

believe it is called the Eagle's Crag, and being in the condition of Hamlet, though not fat, yet 'scant of breath' I paused to take a survey of the valley—this little English-looking spot, with its neat stacks behind, and its flower garden in front, immediately caught my eye. I asked a goatherd who was cutting 'the human face divine' out of a turnip, who lived there. The boy replied an English family that had done a great deal of good in the canton. I instantly made myself sure I saw the object of my search, "An old gentleman and his daughter, and I forget who besides," the boy was proceeding to tell me—but I waited for nothing more. I astonished him with a sovereign, reward small enough for the joy he had given me—and in about a tenth part of the time it had taken me to ascend, I found myself at the gate—I saw you, Catherine, and now I am once more blest with being at your side. Will you not say you are glad of it?—glad for my sake, when you see me happy?"

Catherine immediately found that Hamilton had no idea of her change of condition; her embarrassment at the thought of communicating it to him every moment increased, and was brought to its climax by Mariette returning with her boy. She took him and raised his little face to her lips, to cover her blushes. Hamilton caressed the infant, chiefly because it was in her arms.

“How well nursing becomes you!” said he, “and the little fellow is like you too, I declare. One of Mrs. Barton’s I suppose—she is with you then?”

“No,” said Catherine, and her maternal pride inspiring her with courage for the disclosure, she added with a smile, the innocent archness of which gave new and indescribable charms to her animated countenance, “but is Mrs. Barton to be the only privileged person in the family?—This little fellow, such as he is, belongs to me.”

“Your adopted, I suppose you mean,” said

Hamilton, carelessly. "Some little orphan mountaineer?"

"No," said Catherine, "I simply mean what I say,—he is my own."

"Yours!" exclaimed Hamilton. He turned pale as death—but in a moment recovered his self-possession. "I have to apologize then," said he, with an air of ceremonious coldness, in which bitterness and reproach were too evidently deeply mixed, "for having addressed you by a name which it seems belongs to you no longer."

"Nay," said she, "you called me Catherine, and that name surely belongs to me still."

"Did I call you Catherine? I beg your pardon, I ought to have said Miss Neville."

"No," said Catherine, endeavouring with a forced laugh to give a tone of gaiety to a scene which she felt was beginning to assume a painful interest, "that you most certainly ought not—but, however, I can pardon your ignorance

of my new title—you will not find it in the Court Calendar. I, however, have no such plea to urge, with respect to yours," she continued, wishing to remind Hamilton that surprise or whatever other feeling it might be, had no right to hang so dark a cloud on the brow of a married man,—“I hope the Countess of Winterdale is well?”

“In good truth,” replied Hamilton, “I have made no enquiry, nor received any information on the subject.”

Catherine was petrified. “What!” thought she, “so soon, so entirely separated, “but your child?” she asked, in a voice tremulous with emotion.—Hamilton started up.

“Catherine! do not drive me mad!” he exclaimed, in a voice that startled the gentle Mariette, and drew forth a cry of fear from the child. Mariette took him out of the room,—“but you did not mean it,” said he, seeing her pale with agitation, “forgive me, Catherine, I

will not give way to such violence again. But Catherine, you know not, you cannot conceive the height of felicity you have dashed me from, by telling me you are married! I had garnered up all my hopes of consolation in your affections—unworthy as I was of them—yes, consolation—you may be surprised at the term, but since we last met, nothing but vexation, disappointment, and, I may add, poverty have pursued me.—I am not married nor ever shall be—I am not Earl of Winterdale—nor likely to be. But your husband I had hoped to be. I trusted to your angelic disposition for forgiveness, I trusted to your disinterestedness to be contented with that remnant of my fortunes which, to me, is poverty, but which would be competence to prudence and simplicity like yours; and I trusted to my sword, to win me back my reputation in society—of all my hopes that alone remains to me.”

What conflicting feelings did this disclosure

of Hamilton's situation awaken in Catherine's bosom; who can see an object once fondly loved, unhappy, without sympathising in its sorrows?—who can listen to the self-accusations of one once fondly trusted, without according a full forgiveness of every fault?—but Catherine felt, too, that her sympathy might awaken more pain than it could heal, that her forgiveness of the past might create danger to the future, and now it was that Hamilton paid the penalty of having been a libertine, for he saw that the recollection of it deprived him of the confidence, the friendship of a virtuous woman.—He could not, however, deny himself the pleasure of passing the remainder of the day with Catherine, the presence of Mariette was sufficient check upon his giving way to any feelings that might have made her uncomfortable; and in the course of the hours they spent together, she frankly related all the circumstances that had led to

her union with Edward Longcroft, of whose virtues, and her own happiness with him, she spoke in terms sufficiently enthusiastic, to shut out from Hamilton all hopes of awaking, in her breast, any return of the passion she had once so fervently, so exclusively nourished for himself.

At an early hour he took his leave, for he thought by this observance of propriety, he should deprive her of any plea to refuse him admittance the next day; a pleasure he began to anticipate as soon as he had left the house.— Catherine, on the contrary, no sooner saw him depart, than, overcome by unaccountable feelings, she burst into tears.

“ Why do I weep?” she asked herself, with all the alarm of a sensitive spirit; “ am I not happy? most assuredly I am, blest above the common lot of mortality! would I exchange the object of my affection? oh, no,—not in all the world could I find another so congenial to

me, whom I so wholly venerate, so tenderly love—the dear father of my child ! no, it is not for myself I weep—it is for *him* who is not happy—for *him* who has no endearing ties !— Ah, my felicity would be too perfect, if it were not for that anxiety for *him*, which seems entwined, by some most mysterious sympathy, around every fibre of my heart.”

She sat down to her writing-desk, tore the letter she had commenced to her husband, which, in the morning, she had filled with assurances that she could support his absence, even by the power of the same affection that made his presence her chief good, and immediately wrote another, yet more eloquently entreating his return. This done she went to rest, with a soothing consciousness of duty performed, and with her child in her arms, and prayers on her lips, she found the repose of innocence and peace.

The next day Hamilton took up his quarters

at the Eagle's Nest, and took care to give Catherine a favorable account of his accommodations there, in order to convince her that she had no chance of persuading him, as she had endeavored the day before, to go to a village five miles further off, in search of better; but he did not tell her that he had silenced his landlady, when she was launching forth in praise of Edward Longcroft, and relating the festivities of the village, on his marriage with the sweet young English lady, by informing her that he always made it a rule, when he was travelling, never to talk about his countrymen, and therefore begged he might not hear Mr. Edward Longcroft's name pronounced again.

Catherine now found herself exposed to daily visits, and incessant attentions from Hamilton—visits so artfully timed, and attentions so delicately manifested, as to leave her no excuse for declining the one, no ground for objecting to the other. Skilled in the course he was

pursuing, he paid equal court to Mariette, who Catherine took care should always be present when he came, as to herself—the difference could only be felt, not seen—he never asked leave to join them in their walks, but he took care to do it as if by accident, and sometimes he absented himself for a day or two, on an exploring excursion among the mountains, in order to give something of plausibility to his protracted stay in the vicinity.—He had likewise another plea for it, on the score of his health, which had, in truth, suffered considerably from his last two years' vexations; and, whenever he spoke of himself, it was always as of one who had no longer pleasure in looking forward to any thing in life.

This was a great trial to Catherine—had he been gay and buoyant in hope, as when she first knew him, the sight of him again, securely as her own affections were anchored, in her husband and her child, would not have agitated

her—but he was now ill—he was unhappy ; he required sympathy—it was natural he should seek it of one, who he knew had once loved him better than herself.

Yet Catherine's pure mind shrunk from the most distant idea of having a thought, which she would wish to be concealed from her husband ; and she continually subjected in her own mind, every look, every word of Hamilton, to the rigid question, “ would he have looked in that manner—would he have said so, if Edward had been present :” for she felt intuitively that this was the only true test by which she might be assured of the safety of their intercourse. Would that all married women were equally sensible of its importance. “ *Embrassez votre sœur et votre amie,*” says Volmar to St. Preux, when he receives him under the same roof with his wife, the adored Julie ; “ *plus vous serez familier avec elle, mieux je penserai de vous : mais vivez dans le tete à tete, comme si j'étais*

present, ou devant moi comme si je n'y etois pas. Voila tout ce que je vous demande." This injunction ought to be engraved on the hearts of all those who are admitted into such habits of intimacy with married friends as are equally endearing and delightful, under the guidance of virtue, but which, under the relaxed morality of the present day, too often fosters the basest ingratitude.

To do Hamilton justice, however, he had no premeditated plan of evil against the woman, whom he loved too well to bear the thought of seeing degraded in her own estimation, an outcast in the eyes of the world, or maintaining his place in it only by struggling against the guilty secret of her own unworthiness. O no! there was horror in the thought,—but he was selfish,—he could not forego the gratification of Catherine's society, and accustomed to the language of gallantry, he was unable to lay it aside, even though it did no justice to his real

feelings. At first he had taken no notice of her child, but by degrees he began to caress it, as the unconscious medium of the most flattering attentions to its mother.

“Do you remember that pretty stanza of Lord Byron’s?” he said to her one day, whilst she had her child upon her knee—

“When first I saw your sleeping child
I thought my jealous heart would break;
But when it looked on me and smiled,
I kissed it, for its mother’s sake.”

“No,” said Catherine, a slight flush of displeasure reddening her cheek,—“You know I never read Lord Byron.”

“Ah, but you must read those stanzas. What pathos, what simplicity, what a history of absence, wrongs and disappointment, do those few lines contain—volumes could not tell me more—but you do not feel them, Catherine, as I do.”

“I cannot feel the beauties of any poetry whatsoever,” said Catherine, “when I think

the poet has no feeling himself—I have admired many passages in Lord Byron's earlier works, even to enthusiasm; but when I came to his most unfeeling mockery of the agonizing sympathies he had raised in his description of a storm, by the odious levity with which he concludes it, I closed the book, and never read another page of his writing. I thought of it ever after as of those monstrosities in painting, of beautiful heads, and cloven feet, and it inspired me with the same disgust."

"Ah, Catherine," said Hamilton, "you are what you ever were and will be—your taste is as pure as your principles are correct—I felt the influence of both when we used to read together, in those happy winter evenings which form the only period in my existence that I look back upon with satisfaction—though even that satisfaction is mingled with the bitterest regrets of my soul."

"How cruel you are!" said Catherine—her

tenderness struggling with her indignation, as she turned away from his eyes, fixed on her with an expression she could not forgive him for,—“but you are selfish, as you have ever been.”

Hamilton was stung to the quick.

“Catherine,” said he, “that is the first reproach you have ever made me—I would that I had died, before it had passed your lips, for I shall take the remembrance of it with me into my grave—why does it not open to receive a wretch accursed as I am, with not a being in the world to shed a tear upon it!”

“How you terrify and agitate me!” exclaimed Catherine, trembling, as he strode up and down the room in the greatest disorder—she could not go on—her tears dropped on the cheek of her baby.

Hamilton threw himself at her feet.

“Forgive me, Catherine,” said he,—“forgive me this once, and I will never offend you again.”

“I will, I do forgive you,” said Catherine, “but prove yourself generous, and compassionate—remember that I am a wife—and mother.”

Hamilton pressed the hand extended towards him fervently to his lips—his natural nobleness of feeling for a moment asserted its dominion—“tell me,” said he, “do you wish me to bid you farewell—to quit the country?”

“I do,” she said firmly,—“for both our sakes.”

“You shall then be obeyed,” said he,—and he took up his hat—but Catherine, yielding to the impulse of her heart, put her hand upon his arm.—

“Not yet,” said she—“do not leave me as if in anger—spend this last, last evening, with Mariette and me, as usual—and in the morning, when you cast a look at our little cottage, you will know ‘that prayers, fervent prayers, for your welfare and happiness, are rising from it, for a blessing on your journey.’”

CHAPTER XVI.

WOMAN'S BEST GUARDIAN.

SOME days after this trying though salutary exertion of her influence over Hamilton, Catherine was rewarded by the return of her husband ; and as he pressed her in his arms with a rapture heightened almost into pain by the anxieties of his absence, she felt that his love was her surest refuge, his tender anxiety her safest precaution.

“There is no friend, no guardian, like a husband—we will never part again,” said she, smiling through her tears, with an earnestness that made Edward smile too—but he perceived that she had grown thin, and he chid her, for having taken his absence so much to heart.

Catherine coloured—she could not bear to have any reserves with the dear partner of her bosom—

“I have been retired, but not solitary,” said she—“for Mariette has never left me—and I have latterly seen an old acquaintance—Colonel Hamilton has been here—thinking to find my father in this part of the country.”

Edward in an instant saw the reason of Catherine's so suddenly entreating his return, and penetrated into all her feelings—satisfied of their delicacy and rectitude, he pressed her yet more fondly to his breast—his love was too perfect not to cast out fear. No thought of jealousy could harbour in a heart where Ca-

therine's image was enshrined in all its loveliness and purity.

“You have been uneasy, my best beloved,” said he,—“that Colonel Hamilton should have happened to come here during my absence—and I dare say you treated him less hospitably than I would have done.”

Catherine's heart swelled against his, as she returned, with grateful fondness, his tender embrace, and here Mariette entered, with little Neville, who was asleep when his father returned, and who now reconnoitered him with such a pretty stare of wonder, as drew forth a thousand exclamations of delight in both his parents, which effectually turned the conversation into a more agreeable channel.

Edward had reserved for the evening, when Mariette should retire, as she generally did, to sit by the child's couch with her work, the important communications he had to make respect-

ing the change that had taken place in his worldly prospects. The death of Mr. Longcroft had taken place a few days before he received Catherine's last letter, and he found himself by that event the heir to Longcroft Hall and the surrounding landed property, on condition that should it ever come into the hands of female descendants, their husbands, or heirs should assume the name and arms of Longcroft. To Louisa was left forty thousand pounds, and a small estate in Lancashire: he likewise, on his death-bed, at the earnest entreaty of Edward, bestowed his blessing and forgiveness upon her, and her husband—the withholding of which would have embittered every other mark he might have given of parental feeling—but this granted, both she and Mr. Dacres were fully satisfied with the portion assigned her, and sincerely rejoiced that Edward should finally be put in possession of that honorable place in so-

ciety, which he had from his boyhood been taught to expect, and which it was his uncle's last earthly wish that he should fill.

At the very shadow of a mandate from his Catherine, Edward had flown to her on the wings of love, as soon as the funeral obsequies of his uncle were performed, with the pomp which he had always liked. But it was equally necessary that he should fly back again on those of interest, as early as possible; for already the importance of his situation pressed upon him with its accompanying cares, or rather its enlarged exertions.

“ Yes, we must leave this pretty cottage,” said he, “ where we have known such pure felicity, and we must build another exactly like it, in some pretty secluded spot, where we will retire, at times, to retrace our past happiness, and be thankful for all that we enjoy. And most thankful indeed I am, dear Catherine, that I have had that slight taste of adversity that will

add relish to my prosperity, and that, in shewing me both sides of human nature, will preserve me from the corroding misanthropy of one, and the searing selfishness of the other. I shall now have public duties to perform—my constituents have already waited upon me, and I shall be proud indeed if my Catherine should ever be proud of me.”

“Be proud now, then,” said his wife, with one of her sweetest smiles, for I shall never be prouder of you than I am at this moment.”

The preparations for her departure diverted Catherine from the trial her feelings had so recently undergone, though they were exposed to another not less painful, in taking leave of the venerable Arnaud and his affectionate family. Mariette wept from the moment of hearing that she was going to lose them—but no persuasions could induce the poor girl to accompany her to England.

“Never,” said she, “can I leave the country

that contains the bones of my Amédée, I should have that fever of the soul which we Swiss are too subject to, when we lose sight of our native mountains. No ; I am thankful for all the consolation I have found in your sweet society, grateful for the benefits you have conferred on all of us; and the prayers of the Waldenses will long be breathed for the benevolent travellers who sought them out to relieve their necessities and sympathise in their sufferings."

Arnaud expressed the same sentiments, and gave his parting blessing with as much fervour as had marked his greeting; and with many a retrospective look and many an eulogium on those whom they had left behind, Catherine gradually lost her regrets in the joyful anticipation of seeing again her father and sister, and listening to her husband's plans for the proper employment of the affluence which justly regarded as a sacred deposit, placed in his hands by the favor of heaven, for the benefit of all around him, as well as for himself.

The happiness of Catherine amidst the tenderest ties of affection, the blessings of affluence, the caresses of her children, the adoration of a husband who was faultless in her eyes, may be easily imagined. But, alas, it has been said, that there is a skeleton in every breast, and too surely that in Catherine's, on which she dared not look, was Hamilton. During Edward's parliamentary duties and the consequent residence in London, for several months in the year, she was perpetually exposed to meeting with him, and though she was firm in declining to include him in her visiting list, yet the sight of him at every public place, and at the houses of many of her most intimate acquaintance, was always a grievous trial to her sensibility. Not that Hamilton ever to her secret ear addressed a word to which her purity might not listen—he was too careful not to lose, at any rate, the privilege of approaching her—but his countenance was more expressive than speech.—He looked as he felt—unhappy—dissatisfied with

every thing around him, discontented with himself—he saw that he had lost, by his own folly and dereliction from morality, the only woman in the world calculated to make him really happy. He saw her as elegant and admired in fashionable life as he had ever seen her, simple and affectionate in her domestic circle—he heard her praises in every mouth—and he incessantly said to himself “She might have been mine, had I been worthy of her—it is in the loss of her that all my faults find their punishment.”

It was the misery of Catherine to find her thoughts reverting to Hamilton with painful sympathy, whenever he had approached her in those moods—her pure mind shrunk from his image intruding itself among her most sacred affections; and often, in the silence of the night, her pillow was bedewed with tears for his unhappiness, and for her own, in having to lament it.—How truly has it been said,

“ Of all afflictions taught a lover yet,
The hardest, sure, to learn, is to *forget*.”

The very endeavour to do so seems a species of murder, and the idea of success, a sort of mental annihilation. How little do men consider, when they seek to win the affections of a feeling heart, how entirely responsible they are making themselves for the happiness here, the risk of it hereafter, of the creature whom, for a time, they would appropriate to themselves, and can afterwards totally abandon ! How many tears do they draw from eyes before which their still-beloved image ever stands !—how many sighs they raise in hearts where their cherished idea still remains in all the freshness of real love ! Of those tears, those sighs, will one day be rendered ; and whilst, by them, the sufferers may have been purified and weaned from earth, those “ by whom the offence cometh ” will be required to atone, in their turn, by repentant sighs and tears, for the

selfishness with which they have sought the gratification of their vanity, or their senses, at the expense of the peace and reputation of the innocent.

Had Catherine trusted solely to her own strength of mind, or reasoning powers to conquer her deep-rooted affection for Hamilton, it must have continued to dominate over her with a tyrannic and absolute force, fatal alike to her principles, her happiness and perhaps her reputation. But religion, and religion only, practical and vital, could do for her what she never could have done for herself. Her understanding shewed her all the evils, all the disorders, all the sinfulness to which a divided state of the affections must ever give rise, even though the conduct be irreproachable—the observance of outward duties exemplary. Happily for her, her humility taught her to seek for assistance against the dangerous suggestions of her own heart, in incessant prayer for strength to root

out the image implanted there, and which she felt could not be nourished by remembrances and regrets without offence to Heaven, and injustice to her husband.

“Yes,” she exclaimed, day after day, amidst tears and sighs unseen, unheard, unguessed at by any one, but her Creator, and herself, “I must forget him! not only as if he had ceased to exist, but as if he never had existed. It is the only sacrifice required of me! I am surrounded with blessings. I have every comfort—every elegance that I can desire—I have the luxury of being able to do good, and I have treasures of affection in my natural ties and in those of friendship, beloved by every one whom I hold dear, a thousand times more than I deserve. If it were not for some inward monitor, some spiritual trial, I might, amidst so many temporal goods, forget that I am sinful, and in want of every thing. One only sacrifice I am called upon to make,—alas! it is the sacrifice

of the first-born of my soul ; but, shall I shrink from offering it up, when my heavenly Father asks it of me !—will he not himself kindle the flame that shall purify it, and make it acceptable in his sight ! One only proof is required of my gratitude for the blessings which crown every moment of my existence, yet my selfish, stubborn heart ventures to say, any proof but that willingly would I manifest. Yes, I set up an idol within the inmost recesses of my heart—I worship it in silence and darkness,—and dare I call the temple unpolluted because its false deity is covered with a veil impervious to mortal eyes ! I should die of shame and grief, did those of my husband, my father, my sister, or even of the humble individual by any accident ever pierce it, but to my heavenly Father I presume to withdraw it. He sees the image it conceals, He notes it, and that which I hide so carefully from human beings, the creatures of a day, is, I know, manifest to God and his angels,

and may overwhelm me with confusion throughout eternity !”

Such reflections always brought Catherine on her knees, and never did she rise without feeling the blessed truth, that “those who seek shall find—and unto those that knock it shall be opened.”

Every effort she made to surmount the feeling she condemned, rendered the next more easy to her; and every day filled with fresh gratitude for the exemption from the painful struggles she had so long had to contend with, she felt it every day more incumbent upon her to go through her trial in truth and simplicity. Taught by her own sad experience, that even in the purest, “the heart was deceitful above all things,” she was indulgent only in her judgment of others; severe and searching upon herself. Hence, to all her other graces was added that of the loveliest humility, rare and lovely attribute of the regenerate mind, which

is itself the base of every Christian virtue, the germ of all true happiness, both here and hereafter.

Edward Longcroft had marked all the inward struggles of his wife in silent sorrow. Whilst the cause of them was bitterness to the pride natural to man, her conduct under them was balm to his better feelings—regarding himself as the being appointed by heaven, not only as her friend and companion in this world, but also as her support and guide on her passage to the next, he laboured with a humility and zeal equal to her own, to lay aside his personal feelings, and to rejoice in all things that “worked together for good,” in their common lot. If her consciousness of the injury she had for a time involuntarily committed against his affection for her, increased her dutious attention to his very slightest wish, her grateful acknowledgement of all his solicitude for her happiness, his knowledge of the pains she had taken to sacrifice to her duty every

feeling that might in the remotest degree interfere with it, increased his respect for her, as his sympathy in the grief she laboured to conceal from him increased his tenderness; and added in him the assiduities of a lover to the affection of a husband. Each cast their burdens on the same source for help, and each found them gradually lightened, till at length they could look upon each other with a serene smile, which said, in the full confidence of mutual understanding, that they were thrown off entirely and for ever.

There are some favoured beings, whose lot, like summerskies, purified by one short storm, is bright and clear, the remainder of their mortal day.

Thus it was with Edward and Catherine; occupying that condition in society, which entitles them to associate with the highest ranks, without being shackled by its restraints; in possession of a fortune, liberal enough for the fulfilment of all their duties, the gratification of all their tastes; yet not so large as to call for

that display of profusion, which is often a source of vexation, and never of enjoyment; placed amid scenes endeared to them by their earliest associations, and surrounded by beloved relatives and chosen friends; they luxuriated in all the delights of rural life, cheered by hospitality, dignified by benevolence, refined by mental cultivation, and occasionally varied by the Metropolitan residence and public duties, which were necessary appendages to patriotism, and abilities such as Edward Longcroft was thankful to possess, and proud of exhibiting.—At such seasons Catherine assumed the character of a lady of fashion, as naturally and as unassumingly as at others, she did that of the Lady Bountiful of her little districts of Nethercross and Longcroft—and whilst her husband was commanding the applause of “listening senators,” the fervor of his eloquence, and the attention of ministers, by the soundness of his arguments, she was affectionately anticipating his return to complete the pleasure of parties arranged by her, with so

much judgment, and amused with so much taste, that they were willingly attended by the *elite* of the most distinguished circles, as well in science and literature, as in fashion. Yet it is not among them that we will leave our Catherine, our "goddess of the mountains," but where we found her, amid much sweets and the endearments of domestic life.

A woman's very existence and soul is in her affections.—Blessed, thrice blessed, is she in whom they bloom in right season, and bring forth wholesome fruit. Thus it was with Catherine, exemplary as a daughter, a friend, a mistress and a mother; she formed the felicity of every one around her, in that most favored of all conditions that an accomplished and virtuous woman can fill, in civilized society,—

A HAPPY ENGLISH WIFE.

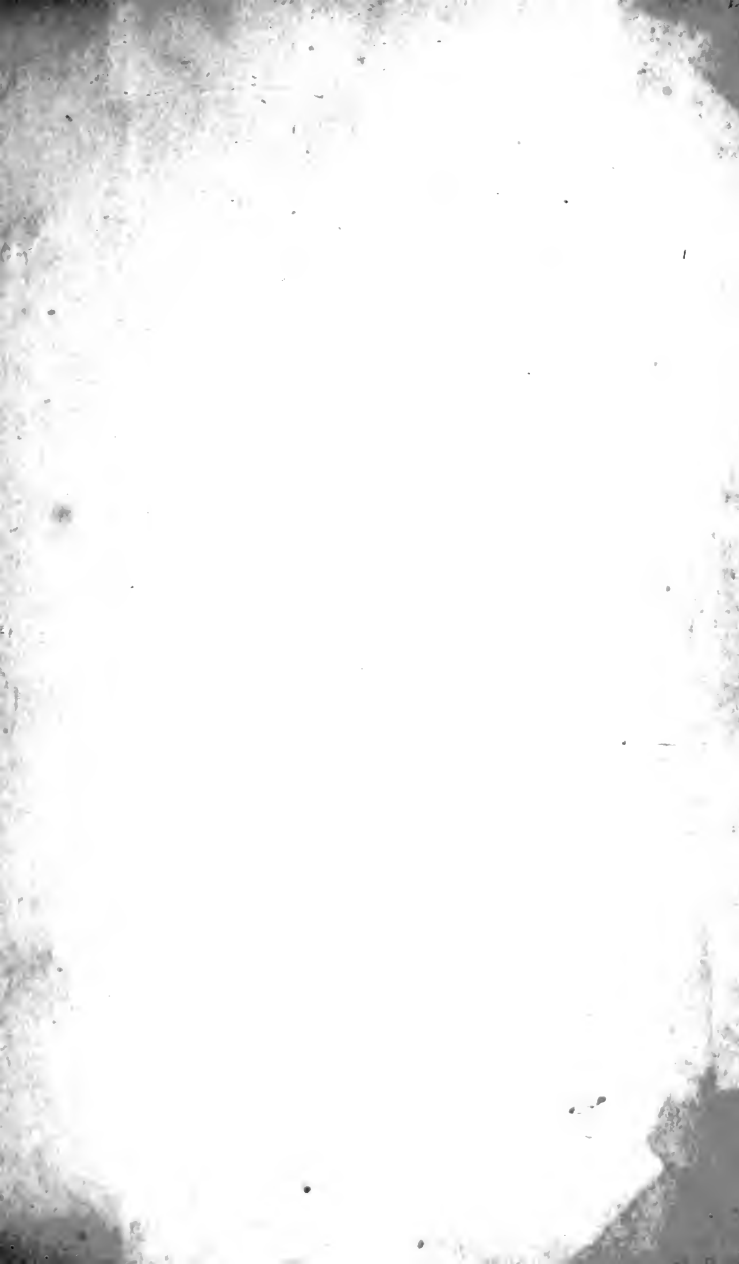
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